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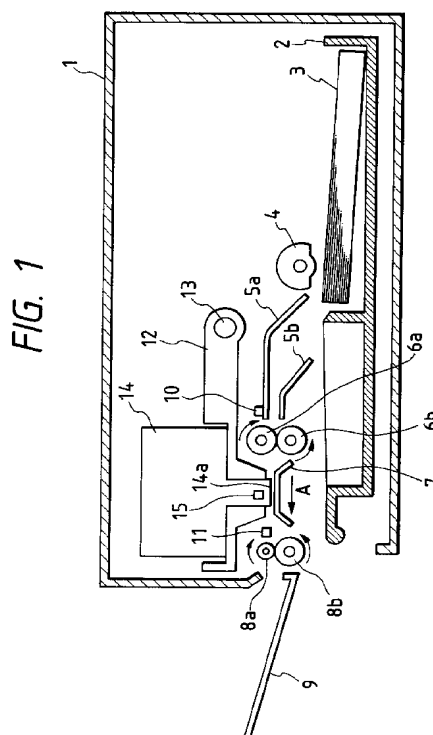
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(54) **Image recording apparatus with improved conveying system for recording medium.**

- (57) An image recording apparatus for controlling an image recording operation on the basis of a detected width of a recording medium by a paper width detecting means after the recording medium is fed to a predetermined position on a platen. Whether the recording medium is desirably conveyed or not is determined on the basis of a signal obtained by said paper width detecting means.



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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to an image recording apparatus for recording an image on a recording medium.

Related Background Art

10 In a conventional recording apparatus such as an ink jet recording apparatus, a paper feeding means comprising a pair of rollers etc. are disposed in the upstream side of the platen with respect to a conveying direction in which a recording medium such as a recording paper or a clear sheet for OHP is supplied along the platen, while in the downstream side of the platen a paper discharge means comprising a pair of rollers etc. are disposed. Further, in vicinity of the paper feeding means and the paper discharge means, a paper feeding sensor and a paper discharge sensor are provided respectively for detecting the presence of the recording medium. A recording head is mounted on a carriage reciprocally moving between the paper feeding means and the paper discharging means in the direction perpendicular to the conveying direction (hereinafter referred to as "paper width direction"), the recording head being opposed to the recording medium on the platen with a predetermined space therebetween. A paper width sensor is provided near a recording head of the carriage to read out a difference between a reflecting light amount from the platen and that from the recording medium to detect a width of the recording medium (hereinafter referred to as "paper width") and a kind of the recording medium (hereinafter referred to as "paper kind").

A method for controlling such an ink jet recording apparatus will now be described.

25 (1) Normal Mode

In this mode, firstly, the recording medium is fed by the paper feeding means along the platen by a paper feeding amount required to make the rear end of the recording medium reach the paper discharging means from a position detected by the paper feeding sensor disposed at the upstream side of the platen. At this time, 30 the presence of the recording medium is detected by the paper discharging means disposed at the downstream side of the platen. If the detected result shows an absence of any recording medium, an indication is made to inform a generation of jamming by judging that the recording medium does not reach the paper discharging means. If the paper discharging sensor detected as the recording medium is present, it is considered that the recording medium reaches the paper discharge means and then the carriage is moved to detect the paper width and the paper kind. Thereafter, the recording operation starts.

In this normal mode, a large blank area where nothing is recorded is generated due to the distance between the rear end of the recording medium and the position where the recording head records. Therefore, it has been proposed a leading and rear end mode in which the recording operation is started from a position immediately near the rear end of the recording medium, without producing any large blank.

40 (2) Leading and Rear Ends Mode

In this mode, firstly the recording medium is fed toward the platen by the paper feeding means, and the paper feeding sensor judges whether the rear end of the recording medium has reached the paper feeding sensor. If the detected result is of no paper, the paper feeding operation continues. While if the reaching of the paper is detected, the rear end of the recording medium is fed in the conveying direction along the platen by the paper feeding means by a predetermined paper feeding amount A required to make the rear end of the recording medium pass over the recording position of the recording head. Next, the carriage is moved in the paper width direction to detect the paper width and the paper kind by the paper width sensor, and the resulting signal pattern therefrom will be used to judge the paper kind. If the paper width sensor is judged as being abnormal, it is informed. Otherwise, a signal indicating that the paper is a predetermined recording paper or a clear sheet for OHP is output to judge the paper width, and thereafter the recording operation starts.

In the method for controlling the ink jet recording apparatus described above, in the normal mode it is possible to judge by the paper discharging sensor if the recording medium is correctly supplied to the paper discharging means. But in the leading and rear ends mode, even if the recording paper is correctly fed by a predetermined paper feeding amount, the rear end of the recording medium does not reach the paper discharging means, leading sometimes to a case in which it is not possible to judge by a sheet exhaust sensor or a paper discharging sensor if the recording medium is correctly fed.

Further, in either mode, for performing a successive recording operation, it is necessary to delicately adjust the rotating angle of the driving motor and the ink outlet opening at the time of stepping feeding in which the sheet member passes out from the conveying upper and lower roller 7, 8 for increasing the interfacing accuracy particularly after completing the recording operation for one sheet for shifting to for the next sheet. For this purpose, it is indispensable to accurately detect the remained amount of the rear end of the sheet member from the conveying upper and lower rollers 7, 8.

Therefore, the number of stepped feeding of the sheet member by the conveying roller from the start of the recording operation is counted, and the size of the sheet member is detected as one of fixed sizes on the basis of the number of stepped feeding until the rear end of the sheet member passes through the paper sensor, thereby judging the remained amount of the rear end of the sheet member. This method, however, has the following disadvantage.

That is, there would arise cases where any optimum controlling operation in accordance with the remained amount at the respective rear end of each sheet member becomes impossible. Such cases includes one in which an indefinite sheet member passes through the paper sensor by accidentally the same number of stepped feedings as that for a definite size sheet member, and another case in which the paper sensor undesirably detects the rear end by the same number of times for the stepped feedings when the difference of length of sheet members between one of A5 size (148 x 210 mm) and 5.5 x 8.5 inches (139.7 x 215.9 mm), in this case the difference being 5.9 mm, is less than the feeding amount for one step. As a result, it becomes impossible to perform the optimum controlling operation corresponding to the remained amount of the rear end of the respective sheet member.

Further, in addition to the problem of the paper feeding accuracy, a disadvantage that white lines between an image recorded at the first line and an image recorded at the second line due to the floating of the paper on the platen when the paper is conveyed would arise.

Namely, although the paper is conveyed through the paper feeding rollers and the paper discharging rollers, the rear end of the paper would not smoothly enter into a pair of paper discharging rollers so as to be floated on the platen due to the rolling at the rear end of the paper when the rear end of the paper is supplied into the paper discharging rollers.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a reliable image recording apparatus using a structure being capable of accurately judging the state of feeding a recording medium without needing any complicated composition.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an image recording apparatus being capable of performing a high-quality image recording operation by securely feeding the recording medium.

According to an aspect of the present invention, an image recording apparatus for controlling an image recording operation on the basis of the width of a recording medium detected by a paper width detecting means after feeding the recording medium to a predetermined position on a platen, the recording medium conveying state is judged on the basis of a signal from said paper width detecting means.

According to another aspect of the present invention, an image recording apparatus comprising: a conveying means for conveying a sheet member; a recording means for recording an image on the sheet member conveyed by said conveying means; a first detecting means for detecting the width of the sheet member; a second detecting means for detecting the rear end of the sheet member at the upstream side of said recording medium; and a control means for controlling at least one of a conveyed amount by said conveying means and recording area of said recording means on the basis of information in accordance with the width of the sheet member detected by said first detecting means and with the conveyed amount of the sheet member until the rear end of the sheet is detected by said second detecting member.

According to another aspect of the present invention, an ink jet recording apparatus comprising: a conveying means for conveying a recording paper along a platen to a predetermined position thereon; a paper holding means for preventing the paper from floating on the platen; and a carriage means for mounting a recording head to be opposed to the platen with a predetermined space therebetween, and moving in the direction perpendicular to the conveying direction.

According to another aspect of the present invention, a recording apparatus for performing a recording operation on a medium disposed on a predetermined recording position by a predetermined recording method, comprising: a light-emitting means for generating light and emitting it to a predetermined detecting position; a detecting means for receiving a light generated by said light-emitting means which is reflected at random at the detecting position but not regularly reflected; and a recognizing means for recognizing the presence and the kind of the recording medium at the detecting position from the intensity of the light detected by said de-

tecting means.

The above and other advantages, features and additional objects of the present invention will be manifest to those versed in the art upon making reference to the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings in which the structural embodiment incorporating the principles of this invention is shown by way of illustrative example.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a first embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a plan view showing a platen part of the first embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a carriage in the first embodiment.

FIGS. 4A to 4D are diagrams showing signal patterns obtained from a paper width sensor in the first embodiment.

FIGS. 5A and 5B are diagrams showing a potential recording area in the normal mode and in the leading and rear ends mode of the first embodiment, in which FIG. 5A is in the normal mode while FIG. 5B is in the leading and rear ends mode.

FIG. 6 is a diagram showing an operation panel of the first embodiment.

FIG. 7 is a block diagram showing a control system of the first embodiment.

FIG. 8 is a flow diagram showing a controlling method of an ink jet recording apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view showing a carriage in the second embodiment of the ink jet recording apparatus according to the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a plan view showing platen parts of the second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11 is the third flow diagram showing a method for controlling an ink jet recording apparatus according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a flow diagram showing a flow of the positional judging process of a recording medium according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 13A to 13C are diagrams showing an output pattern of a paper width sensor.

FIGS. 14A to 14C are diagrams showing a relationship between a paper feeding state and an image area of the recording medium.

FIG. 15 is a plan view showing platen parts of the ink jet recording apparatus according to the fourth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 16 is a flow diagram showing a flow of the positional judging process according to the fourth embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 17A to 17C are diagrams showing a state of the recording medium fed over the platen.

FIGS. 18A and 18B are diagrams showing a state of the recording medium supplied diagonally.

FIG. 19 is a diagram for the explanation of a reflective photosensor according to the embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. 20 is a diagram showing a sensor circuit of the present invention.

FIG. 21 is a diagram for the explanation of the irregular reflective medium of the present invention.

FIG. 22 is a diagram showing an aspect where the sensor is diagonally mounted according to an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 23 is a diagram showing a relationship between the kind of the recording medium and the detected output.

FIG. 24 is a diagram showing a detected output property when a mirror is used as a recording medium.

FIG. 25 is a diagram showing a detected output property when an OHP sheet is used as a recording medium.

FIG. 26 is a diagram showing a detected output property when a coat paper is used as a recording medium.

FIG. 27 is a diagram showing a measuring jig for varying the relative positional relationship between the sensor and the recording medium.

FIG. 28 is a diagram for the explanation of the direction property of the sensor.

FIG. 29 is a comparative diagram for the detected output properties with respect to the recording mediums in the embodiments.

FIG. 30 is a diagram showing schematically a composition of an image recording apparatus incorporating the present invention.

FIG. 31 is a cross-sectional view of an image recording apparatus shown in FIG. 30.

FIG. 32 is a diagram showing a state where the sheet member is sunk.

FIG. 33 is a block diagram showing a controlling section of an image recording apparatus shown in FIG. 30.

FIG. 34 is a diagrams showing a relationship between a remained amount at the rear end and an error of recording junction when the controlling operations are carried out in the fifth embodiment.

FIG. 35 is a flow diagram showing a sequence of controlling operation in the fifth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 36 is a flow diagram showing the details of a part of FIG. 36.

FIG. 37 is a diagram showing a schematic composition of an image recording apparatus according to the sixth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 38 is a diagram showing a relationship between the remained amount of the rear end and an error of recording junction when the controlling operations are carried out in the sixth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 39 is a flow diagram showing a sequence of the controlling operation according to the sixth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 40 is a flow diagram showing in detail a part of FIG. 39.

FIG. 41 is a flow diagram showing in detail a part of FIG. 39.

FIG. 42 is a cross-sectional view of an image recording apparatus according to the seventh embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 43 is a diagram showing an example of a recorded image of the present invention.

FIG. 44 is a diagram showing a schematic structure of an image recording apparatus according to a seventh embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 45 is a diagram for the explanation of a relationship between a conveyed state of the sheet material and the recorded position.

FIG. 46 is a diagram showing a schematic structure of an image recording apparatus according to an eighth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 47 is a diagram showing a relationship between a conveying state of sheet material and a recording position.

FIG. 48 is a diagram for the explanation of the conveyed state of the sheet material and the recorded position.

FIG. 49 is a diagram showing a schematic structure of an image recording apparatus according to the ninth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 50 is a plan view showing a relationship between a recording head and a sheet material in an image recording apparatus shown in FIG. 49.

FIG. 51 is a plan view showing a relationship between a recording head and a sheet material in an image recording apparatus shown in FIG. 49.

FIG. 52 is a cross-sectional view of an apparatus according to the present invention.

FIG. 53 is a flow diagram of manual feeding operation according to the present invention.

FIG. 54 is a cross-sectional view showing a state in which a pressing member and a recording paper are pressed by a carriage of the present invention.

FIGs. 55A to 55C are diagrams for the explanation of a SUS plate up mechanism according to the present invention.

FIGs. 56A and 56B are diagrams for the explanation of a state at manual paper feeding.

FIG. 57 is a flow diagram of paper feeding operation in RHS mode according to the present invention.

FIG. 58 is a flow diagram of paper feeding operation in OHP mode according to the present invention.

FIG. 59 is a diagram showing a state of the pressing member at the time of OHP mode according to the present invention.

FIG. 60 is a flow diagram of a printing mode of a coat paper according to the present invention.

FIG. 61 is a perspective view showing a state in which a pressing member and a recording paper are pressed by a carriage of the present invention.

FIG. 62 is a flow diagram of a printing mode of OHP according to the present invention.

FIG. 63 is a flow diagram of a printing mode of RHS according to the present invention.

FIG. 64 is a block diagram showing a controlling operation of the present invention.

FIGs. 65A and 65B are diagrams for the explanation of an third embodiment according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of an first embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus according to the

present invention, FIG. 2 is a plan view of platen parts of the same embodiment, and FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a carriage of the same embodiment. The first embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to those drawings.

As shown in FIG. 1, at the bottom of the body 1, a cassette 2 incorporating a recording medium such as a coated paper (a paper with a coating on its surface for promoting the absorption of ink) cut out in a predetermined magnitude or a clear sheet for OHP is removably mounted thereon. Above an end of the recording medium 3, a pick-up roller 4 is disposed with two guide plates 5a, 5b in vicinity thereof. At the left-hand side of the guide plates 5a, 5b in the drawing, a pair of paper feeding rollers 6a, 6b as paper feeding means, a platen 7 and a pair of paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b as paper discharging means are sequentially disposed as a row. A conveying means is composed of this paper feeding means and the paper discharging means. At the left-hand side of the pair of paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b in the drawing, a paper discharging tray 9 is removably mounted on the body 1 as projecting externally. In the guide plate 5a, a paper feeding sensor 10 is disposed closely to the paper feeding roller 6a, while a paper discharging sensor 11 is disposed at a position close to the right-hand side of the paper discharging roller 8a in the drawing (see FIG. 2). Each of the paper feeding sensor 10 and the paper discharging sensor 11 is composed as a type for reading out a reflecting light from the recording medium by a reflective photosensor disposed to face the recording medium 3, or a type for detecting a shift of a lever movable in contact with the recording medium by a photosensor or a microswitch. Although not shown, a movable lever of the paper discharging sensor 11 is disposed in vicinity of the paper discharging tray 9 side of the paper discharging roller 8a for detecting the rear end of the recording medium having been manually inserted through the paper discharging tray 9 in case of manually inserting recording case as mentioned later.

The carriage 12 is slidably coupled to a guide shaft 13 mounted on the body 1 in parallel to the paper feeding roller 6a, and reciprocally moved in the paper width direction (arrow B direction and its reverse direction) perpendicular to the conveying direction (arrow A direction) being the direction for feeding the recording medium 3 on the platen 7 by a driving means such as a timing belt, a pulley and a motor which are not shown. The carriage 12 is provided with a removable recording head 14 for ejecting an ink through an ejection opening (not shown) to perform the recording. An ejecting opening surface 14a at which the ejecting opening of the recording head 14 is opened is opposed to the platen 7 with a predetermined gap (e.g.: 0.75 mm) therebetween. Immediately near the ejecting opening surface 14a, a paper width sensor 15 is provided on the carriage 12, composed of a reflective photosensor for radiating light and reading the amount of the reflected light. At a part of the radiated light path of the paper width sensor 15 on the platen 7, a silver plate 16 (see FIG. 22) being nickel-plated for increasing the light amount of the reflected light is disposed. Further, the paper width sensor 15 and the ejecting opening of the recording head 14 are separated by a distance between the rear end of the recording medium 3 and the rear end of the recording potential region 3b in case of a leading/rear ends mode (see FIG. 5) mentioned later.

The operation of the apparatus when the recording medium 3 is conveyed will now be described. The top recording medium 3 is fed between the two guide plates 5a, 5b by a pick-up roller 4, and the rear end thereof will reach the nip portion of the pair of paper feeding roller 6a, 6b. Thereafter, the recording medium 3 is fed in the conveying direction (arrow A) along the platen 7 by being held between the pair of paper feeding rollers 6a, 6b which are rotating in the direction of the shown arrow (FIG. 1). The recording medium having passed through the platen 7 will be discharged to the paper discharging tray 9 after fed by being held between the pair of paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b which are rotating in the shown arrow (FIG. 1) direction synchronously with the pair of paper feeding rollers 6a, 6b. The recording head 14, being moved by the carriage 12, ejects the ink against the recording medium 3 on the platen 7 to carry out the recording operation. Further, in the case of manually inserting recording operation, the recording medium 3 is inserted along the paper discharging tray 9 to reach the nip portions of the pair of the paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b, which is then sensed by a movable lever not shown of the paper discharging sensor 11. The pair of the paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b are rotated in the reverse direction of the shown arrow direction (FIG. 1) to feed the recording medium 3 along the platen 7 in the reverse direction of the arrow A direction by a predetermined paper feeding amount. At this time, the pair of paper feeding rollers 6a, 6b also rotate in the reverse direction of the shown arrow direction (FIG. 1) in synchronicity with the pair of the paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b. After the recording medium 3 is fed to a predetermined position, the recording medium 3 is conveyed in the arrow A direction as the recording head 14 performs the recording operation to be discharged on the paper discharging tray 9.

Next, the operation to detect the paper width and the paper kind will now be described. The carriage 12 moves from a position shown in FIG. 2 to a reverse side of the platen 7 in the arrow B direction. Namely, the paper width sensor 15 moves in the arrow B direction to pass an area where the rear end of the recording medium is to be present in the case of the leading/rear ends mode. During this movement, the paper width sensor 15 radiates light toward the platen 7 side to read the reflected light amount.

FIGS. 4A - 4B show signal patterns obtained from the paper width sensor 15, in which the lateral axis corresponds to the moving path of the radiated light on the platen 7, while the transverse axis represents the light amount of the reflected light. When the recording medium 3 is in the position shown by the solid line in FIG. 2, namely when it does not reach yet the moving path of the radiated light, the signal pattern obtained by the paper width sensor 15 will be as a signal pattern 1 as shown in FIG. 4A. The convex portion with a small signal pattern 1 stands for the reflected light amount from the silver plate 16 of the platen 7. In case that the recording medium 3 is at the position shown by an alternate long and short dash line in FIG. 2, i.e. when the rear end of the recording medium 3 covers the silver plate 16 reaching a predetermined position in the leading/rear ends mode, while the recording medium 3 consists of a coat paper (white), the signal pattern obtained from the paper width sensor 15 will be as a signal pattern 2 shown in FIG. 4B. The convex portion of the signal pattern 2 represents the reflected light amount from the coat paper. When the recording medium 3 is a clear sheet (transparent) for OHP, the signal pattern obtained from the paper width pattern will be as a signal pattern 3 shown in FIG. 4C. The wide convex portion in the signal pattern 3 stands for the reflected light amount, while the small convex portion stands for the reflected light amount of the silver plate 16 having passed the clear sheet. The case where no signal pattern is obtained as shown in FIG. 4D would suggest an occurrence of fails in the paper width sensor 15 and the platen 7.

FIG. 5A shows a possible recording area in case of normal mode of the ink jet recording apparatus according to the present embodiment, while FIG. 5B shows a possible recording area in case of the leading/rear ends mode. The rear end of the possible recording area 3a (shadowed area in FIG. 5B)) in the conveying direction (arrow A) is at a position internal by 16 mm from the rear end of the recording medium, while the rear end of the possible recording area 3a is at a position internal by 18mm from the rear end of the recording medium 3. The rear end and the leading end of the possible recording area 3b in the case of leading/rear ends mode will be at a position internal by 5 mm respectively from the leading and rear ends of the recording medium 3. The selection of the normal mode or the leading/rear ends mode is carried out through a normal mode key 17b or a leading/rear ends mode key 17c on the console(operation) panel 17 mounted on the body 1 (see FIG. 6). The start key 17a is to start recording.

FIG. 7 is a block diagram showing a controlling system of an ink jet recording apparatus according to the present embodiment. The controlling section 18 comprises a CPU 18a for performing the process of the first embodiment of a controlling method of the ink jet recording apparatus according to the present invention mentioned later, a ROM 18b for storing fixed data such as programs in accordance with the aforementioned process, and a RAM 18c for operation.

FIG. 8 is a flow diagram showing a controlling method of the ink jet recording apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention. The present embodiment will now be described with reference to this FIG. 8.

The first embodiment of the aforementioned ink jet recording apparatus is used to carry out the present embodiment. In response to a recording start order, the recording medium 3 is supplied from the cassette 2 by the pick-up roller 4 (step S1). In the step S2, the presence of the recording medium 3 is judged by the paper feeding sensor 10, and if the judge result is negative i.e. no recording medium 3 is present it is informed that no recording medium 3 is in the cassette 2 (step S3), while if the judged result is affirmative i.e. a recording medium 3 is in the cassette 2 the process is advanced to the step S4. In step S4, whether the leading/rear ends mode is selected is judged, and if it is in the leading/rear ends mode, the operation advances to the step S5 in which the recording medium 3 is fed by the pair of paper feeding rollers 6a, 6b by a paper feeding amount C necessary to make the rear end of the recording medium 3 reach a predetermined position (shown by the alternate long and short dash line in FIG. 2), and shifting then to the step S9. In the normal mode, it is advanced to the step S6 in which the recording medium 3 is fed by the pair of paper feeding rollers 6a, 6b by a paper feeding amount D required to hold the rear end of the recording medium 3 by the pair of paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b. Subsequently, in step S7, the paper discharging sensor 11 judges the presence or absence of the recording medium 3, and if it is judged to be absent, the process advances to the step S8 to inform the state of jamming in which the distal end of the recording medium does not reach the paper discharging rollers 8a, 8b. If it is judged to be present, the process advances to step S9. In step S9, the carriage 12 is moved to the paper width direction (arrow B direction) to detect the paper width and the paper kind, and in step S10 the paper kind is judged on the basis of the signal pattern obtained by the paper width sensor 15. If the signal pattern is as a signal pattern 1 shown in FIG. 4A, it is judged that the recording medium 3 does not reach a predetermined position on the platen 7, and advances to step S101 to inform of the occurrence of jamming state. If the signal pattern is as signal pattern 2 shown in FIG. 4B, the recording medium 3 is judged to be a coat paper and the process advances to step S102. If the signal pattern is as the signal pattern 3 shown in FIG. 4C, the recording medium 3 is judged to be a clear sheet and the process advances to step S103. If the signal pattern is as a signal pattern 4 shown in FIG. 4D, it is judged that any fail has occurred in the paper

width sensor 15, the platen 7 and the carriage 12 and the like and the process advances to step S104 to inform of the fail. After passing through the step S102 or the step S103, the process advances to step S11 to judge the paper width on the bases of the signal pattern 2 or 3. Thereafter, the recording operation starts.

In case of manual feeding, the recording operation in leading/rear ends mode will now be described. After approximately one second has passed from the detection of the recording medium 3 inserted through the paper discharging tray 9 by the movable lever not shown of the paper discharging sensor 11, the recording medium 3 is fed in the reverse direction of the arrow A direction by the conveying means. The recording medium 3 is continued to be fed even after the paper feeding sensor 10 detected the presence of the medium, and when the paper discharging sensor 11 detects the absence of the paper the recording medium 3 is fed in the reverse direction of the arrow A direction by a paper feeding amount required to move the rear end of the recording medium 3 from that position to a predetermined position for the leading/rear ends mode. The subsequent steps are identical to those after the step S9 (including step S9) shown in FIG. 8.

According to the method for controlling the ink jet recording apparatus of this embodiment, since the signal pattern 1 obtained by the paper width sensor 15 is used also to judge the presence or absence of the rear end of the recording medium at a predetermined position on the platen 7, the jamming state can be securely detected even in case of leading/rear ends mode in which the paper discharging sensor 11 is unavailable. As a result, the undesirable ink-jetting action against directly the platen is prevented so as to keep the surface at the side of the platen 7 of the apparatus and the recording medium 3.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view showing a carriage of the ink jet recording apparatus, according to a second embodiment of the present invention, and FIG. 10 is a plan view showing the platen section of the same embodiment. The second embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to those FIGS. 9 and 10.

The carriage 32 has two paper width sensors disposed laterally near the ejecting opening surface (not shown) of the recording head 14, a first paper width sensor 35a at the up-stream side of the conveying direction and a second paper width sensor 35b at the downstream side. The first and second paper width sensors 35a and 35b are disposed along the conveying direction with a proper gap (e.g. 5mm) therebetween. Also the first paper width sensor 35a and the ejecting opening (not shown) of the recording head 14 are separated from each other in the conveying direction by a distance between the rear end of the recording medium and the rear end of the possible recording area in case of leading/rear ends mode. A first silver plate 36a and a second silver plate 36b are disposed at positions on the platen 27 corresponding to the first paper width sensor 35a and the second paper width sensor 35b respectively. Other structures are the same as those of the first embodiment already described above.

According to the paper width and kind detecting operation of this embodiment, the carriage 32 is moved from a position shown in FIG. 10 toward a paper width direction (arrow B direction) perpendicular to the conveying direction (arrow A direction). The first paper width sensor 35a is moved in the paper width direction such that the rear end of the recording medium in the leading/rear ends mode passes across a certain area (shown by alternate long and short dot line in FIG. 10), while the second paper width sensor 35b moves in the paper width direction at the downstream side of the conveying direction of the area.

Next, a second embodiment of the method for controlling the ink jet recording apparatus according to the present invention will now be described. In this embodiment, the ink jet recording apparatus of the second embodiment mentioned above is used.

In a step for judging the paper kind when the leading/rear ends mode is selected, if both signal patterns obtained by the first paper width sensor 35a and the second paper width sensor 35b are as the signal pattern 1 shown in FIG. 4A, the rear end of the recording medium 3 is judged not to have reached a predetermined position, thereby informing of the occurrence of jamming state. If the signal pattern of the first paper width sensor 35a is as the signal pattern 2 shown in FIG. 4B and the signal pattern of the second paper width sensor 35b is as the signal pattern 1 shown in FIG. 4A, it is judged that the rear end of the recording medium 3 has reached a predetermined position and that the recording medium 3 is a coat paper, and thereafter the process advances to the paper width judging step. If the signal pattern of the first paper width sensor 35a is as the signal pattern 3 shown in FIG. 4C and the signal pattern of the second paper width sensor 35b is as the signal pattern 1 shown in FIG. 4A, it is judged that the rear end of the recording medium 3 has reached a predetermined position and that the recording medium is a clear sheet for OHP, and thereafter the process advances to the paper width judging step. If both signal patterns of the first and the second paper width sensors 35a and 35b are as the signal pattern 2 shown in FIG. 4B or as the signal pattern 3 shown in FIG. 4C, it is judged that the rear end of the recording medium 3 has passed over a predetermined position, such that the rear end of the recording medium is moved in the reverse direction of the arrow A direction by the conveying means until the rear end of the recording medium 3 comes back to the predetermined position. If at least either one of the first paper width sensor 35a and the second paper width sensor 35b is as the signal pattern 4 shown

in FIG. 4D, it is judged that any fail has occurred and is informed.

The other aspects than those above-described are the same as explained in the first embodiment.

In this embodiment, in addition to those obtained in the first embodiment of the method for controlling the ink jet recording apparatus of the present invention, there is an advantage that the following matters can be detected separately: the rear end of the recording medium does not reach the predetermined position on the platen; the rear end of the recording medium reaches the predetermined position on the platen 7; and the rear end of the recording medium has passed over the predetermined position on the platen 7.

Next, a third embodiment of the present invention will now be described. In the first embodiment, in the leading/rear ends mode, whether the rear end of the recording medium has reached the predetermined position on the platen was checked on the basis of the output from the paper width sensor. Meanwhile, according to this embodiment, in addition thereto, the lateral (in the direction perpendicular to the conveying direction) positional deviation of the recording medium is checked on the basis of the output from the paper width sensor. FIG. 11 is a flow diagram showing a controlling sequence of this embodiment, in which the judging of the paper width is made in step S11, and thereafter the positional judgment of the recording medium is made in step S12. The processes in other steps are identical to those in FIG. 8 so as to be omitted.

FIG. 12 shows a sequence of the positional judgment process for the recording medium. The recording medium is checked for any lateral (left and right) deviation on the basis of the output data from the paper width sensor 15.

In this embodiment, the position of the signal pattern being the checked output from the sensor is checked for any deviation from the reference position, and if such a deviation is present the deviated amount is examined. Firstly in step S121, the output pattern of the paper width sensor 15 is checked. If it is as shown in FIG. 13A, it is judged that the recording medium has been correctly fed, and the process advances to the recording operation. If it is as a pattern as shown in FIGS. 13B and 13C, the recording medium is judged as being deviated laterally in the left or right direction respectively. In step S122, the deviated amount is detected, and it is judged as jamming state if it is equal to or above 3.5 mm. If it is less than 3.5 mm, the recording position of the deviated amount is corrected in step S124. The threshold value 3.5 mm of this deviated amount judgement is based on the lateral blank amount, 5 mm respectively at the left and right end, of the recording medium of this embodiment. The recording positional correction in step S124 is to change the setting of the parameter of the recording operation as to change the recording position (x direction). FIG. 14 shows a deviation of the recording image position when the recording medium is conveyed with a lateral deviation. When the recording medium is laterally deviated in the left or right direction as shown in FIGS. 14B and 14C, the image area is subject to the corresponding deviation in the left or right direction in accordance therewith. To overcome this, such parameters as recording timing, etc. are reset so that the image can be recorded at the center of the recording medium as shown in FIG. 14A. In the case of FIG. 14, since both FIGS. 14B and 14C present 3 mm of deviation in the left and right directions respectively, a correction by 3mm is performed.

Next, a fourth embodiment of the present invention will now be described. In the second embodiment aforementioned, there are provided two paper width sensors to detect the reaching or passing over of the rear end of the recording medium the predetermined position of the platen. Meanwhile, in this embodiment, a diagonal passing of the recording medium is further detected to control the operation of the apparatus.

FIG. 15 is a plan view showing a platen section of the ink jet recording apparatus according to the present embodiment. In FIG. 15, the same numerals refer the same components in FIG. 10. The first paper width sensor 35a and the second paper width sensor 35b are disposed along the conveying direction with a proper gap (e.g. 10 mm approximately) therebetween. For detecting the paper width and the paper kind, the carriage 32 is moved in the paper width direction (arrow B direction) perpendicularly to the conveying direction (arrow A direction) from the position shown in FIG. 15. This is the same manner as in the second embodiment. The first paper width sensor 35a moves in the paper width direction as passing through the rear portion of the recording medium in case of the leading/rear ends mode, while the second paper width sensor 35b moves in the paper width direction at the downstream side in the conveying direction of the area.

The present embodiment features to detect more in detail the position of the recording medium using these two paper width sensors 35a, 35b, and to carry out controlling operation suitable for the respective case. The total controlling sequence of this embodiment is substantially the same as that in FIG. 11, the explanation will be omitted.

FIG. 16 shows a determination control flow diagram for the recording medium position. In step S121, the pattern of the first paper sensor 35a is checked. Next in steps S122 - S124, the pattern of the second paper width sensor 35b is checked. If the pattern of the paper width sensor 35a is judged in step S121 as FIG. 13A the process advances to the step S122. Likewise, if it is as FIG. 13B then to step S123, and if as FIG. 13C to step S124. In the pattern of FIG. 13A, the recording medium is judged as having been at the correct position at the time of passing through the first paper width sensor 35a, while in FIG. 13B and 13C it is deviated to the

left and right side respectively. Subsequently in step S122, the output pattern of the second paper width sensor 35b is checked. If it is as shown in FIG. 13A, the process advances to the recording operation without recording positional correction in step S125, since the first and the second paper width sensors have the pattern as FIG. 13A i.e. the recording medium has been conveyed to the correct position as shown in FIG. 17A. If the output pattern of the first and the second paper width sensors are as shown in FIG. 13B and 13C, the process advances to the jamming processing routine of step S130. This is because the recording medium is considered to have been fed diagonally as shown in FIG. 18A and 18B, due to the output pattern of the first paper width sensor 35a as shown in FIG. 13A. The same is true in steps S123 and S124. Namely, if the output pattern data of the first paper width sensor 35a is as shown in FIG. 13B, when the output pattern data of the second paper width sensor 35b is as shown in FIG. 13A or 13C, they would be in jamming state respectively in step S130. Further, if the output pattern data of the first paper width sensor 35a is as shown in FIG. 13C, when the output pattern data of the second paper width sensor 35b are as shown in FIG. 13A or 13B, they would be in jamming state in step S130.

Also, when both the output patterns of the first paper width sensor 35a and the second paper width sensor 35b are as shown in FIG. 13B, namely when the fed recording medium is as shown in FIG. 18A, if the deviated amount of the output patterns from the first and the second paper width sensors 35a, 35b in step S126 are less than 3.5 mm respectively with no difference therebetween (a state as shown in FIG. 17B), the recording position is corrected in step S127 to advance to the recording operation.

Further, when the output patterns of the first paper width sensor 35a and the second paper width sensor 35b are both as shown in FIG. 13C, namely when the fed recording medium is as shown in FIG. 18B, likewise the process advance to the step S128 to perform the examination. If the deviated amount is equal to or less than 3.5 mm with no difference therebetween (a state as shown in FIG. 17C), the recording position is corrected in step S129 to advance to the recording operation.

Thus, using the signal pattern obtained from the paper width sensor for judging the fed state of the recording medium, the undesirable direct printing on the platen can be securely prevented, thereby keeping the platen side surface of the recording medium clean.

Further, when the recording medium is fed with a deviation in the X direction as shown in FIGS. 18B and 18C, the right and left blanks can be adjusted by deviating the recording start position to obtain a desired image recording.

According to the present invention as composed above, it is possible to detect that the recording medium does not reach a predetermined position on the platen or that there is a positional deviation by using the signal obtained from the paper width detecting means to judge the conveyed state of the recording medium without requiring any particular sensor separately. As a result, the direct printing on the platen can be certainly prevented so as to keep the platen side surface of the apparatus and the recording medium clean.

The above-described sensor can be composed to have higher sensing accuracy by using a sensor unit of the following structure. This sensor unit is composed of a reflective-type photosensor 48 shown in FIG. 19 and a circuit shown in FIG. 20. A terminal Vo in FIG. 20 is input to an A/D converter of the control section as a detected output to be processed.

The reflective-type sensor unit 48 in FIG. 19 includes a light-emitting element 48A and a light-receiving element 48B. Slits 49A and 49B are formed to emit light from the vertical plane against a recording medium 47 with an angle of θ (hereinafter referred to as "light emitting angle") and to receive light with an angle of θ (hereinafter referred to as "light receiving angle") respectively to provide the light emitting and receiving angles with a directivity. For example, the light emitting element is a LED while the light receiving element 48B is a phototransistor. The light emitted from the light emitting element 48A impinges on the recording medium with a light emitting angle. The light reflected therefrom is received by the light receiving element 48B, and a current corresponding to the light energy received there flows as a base current for the transistor Q1. As a result, the detected output Vo is output in accordance with the energy received at the light receiving element. The VR1 is a variable resistor for adjusting the gain of the circuit.

When such a sensor unit as described above is used for a recording medium, if the recording medium is substantially a regular reflector, a regular reflective light 50 having the same reflective angle as an incident angle would be the main component with thereby a small random reflection component 51. However, as to the surface of the recording medium, since it has convexes and concaves in microview due to its textile, the random reflection component 51 would be large.

FIG. 23 is a graphic diagram showing a measured result of the detected output Vo by the sensor unit 48 with the kind of the recording medium and the sensor mounting angle being varied. In FIG. 23, a coat paper (a paper having a coating-processed surface to be properly ink-stained) used in this embodiment is compared with an OHP sheet. The output Vo in case of the coat paper is adjusted by the VR1 to be 3V, in which state the output in case of OHP sheet is measured. As clearly seen from the FIG. 23, it is understood that the output

level in the case of OHP sheet when measured on various sensor mounting angle would range from 1.8 V to 4.2 V. The reason can be explained on the basis of FIGS. 24 to 26, which show reflective properties of the sensor unit 3 for three kinds of mirror OHP sheet coat paper as recording medium. The measurement system is shown in FIG. 27. But as to the mirror shown in FIG. 24, the reason is because the gain of the circuit is reduced by the variable resistor VR1 in comparison with the OHP sheet or the coat paper. This is due to the fact that, since the mirror has a high light reflective rate, the detected output V_o would be minimum at a region where the rotating angle in FIG. 24 is a negative value, but even so it would reach a saturated voltage of the circuit.

In the drawing, the code 1 is designated as a distance between the medium and a distance from a medium to the sensor. The lateral axis α is an angle rotated with a point located at a distance from the center of the recording. The clockwise rotation would be referred as plus direction while the counterclockwise as minus direction. But the gain, the value of VR1 in FIG. 20 is set to be different from that in the case of mirror and those of the other two cases. Further, for the sensor used in this case, the light emitting angle is formed to be smaller than the light receiving angle.

From FIGS. 24 to 26, the following matters can be understood: (1) The OHP sheet is of substantially the same property as that in the case of mirror; (2) In the case of coat paper the output V_o is hardly related to the rotating angle, that is the random reflection is principal. As shown in FIGS. 24 and 25, the used sensor has a peak of the output level near 6 degrees of the angle. This will now be described with reference to FIG. 28. FIG. 28 shows a light path passing from the light emitting section 48A to the light receiving section 48B. If $\theta_{Tr} = \theta_{LED}$, the light emitted from the light emitting section 48A passes through the path shown by dotted line and then reflected at the point d to reach the light receiving section 48B. However, due to the relationship $\theta_{Tr} > \theta_{LED}$, the light emitted from the light emitting section 48A will pass through a line 121 to enter the point P on the recording medium. The line 120 designate the light when the gradient angle of the recording medium is zero, in which the reflected light is reflected along the line 121 not to reach the light receiving section 48B. But it is possible to obtain the maximum output level since the reflected light passes through the line 124 to enter the light receiving element 48B by inclining the medium surface by an angle in the same manner as in the medium 123 shown. Due to these reasons, in a regular reflection medium such as a mirror or an OHP sheet, the V_o becomes maximum when the rotating angle of the medium is set to an certain angle in the plus direction.

From the results noted above, it would be clear that detecting the presence, the kind and the effective width of the recording medium by a single reflective sensor on the basis of only the absolute value of the output V_o level by a single reflective sensor 48 will have difficulty because of such reasons as the difference of the sensor mounting accuracy (distance, horizontal degree etc.) and the difference of the characteristics inherent in the sensor (directivity etc.).

Therefore, according to the first embodiment of this invention, a window is formed on a part of a black painting metal plate provided on a conveying path, making its part as a silver-plated pseudo-mirror surface. With such a structure, the reflective rate at the mirror surface will increase to show gradually an eminent output property as shown in FIG. 24.

Further, it is also effective to approximate the light emitting - receiving relationship to a regular reflection by inclining the pseudo-mirror surface from the horizontal plane by an angle on the sensor mounting angle mentioned later.

In addition, as a second feature described with reference to FIGS. 24 and 26, the directivity of the sensor 48 is previously set such that a point deviated by a predetermined angle (6 degrees in this embodiment). Namely, the sensor 48 is designed to have its best sensitivity on rotating in the "+" direction in FIG. 27.

Furthermore, the third feature of the present invention is to have set the relation ship between the sensor and the recording medium as shown in FIG. 22 with a predetermined angle ϕ in the direction opposite to the best sensitivity direction. In FIG. 24, this corresponds to the area of rotating angle " $\alpha < 0$ ". As a result, the magnitude relationship of the absolute output level of the OHP paper and the coat paper can be set as "OHP paper < coat paper" from FIGS. 25 and 26.

From the three features aforementioned, the detection output level with respect to each recording medium according to the apparatus of this embodiment will be as shown in FIG. 29. The dotted line shows the case of coat paper, in which the output level is set to be 3.0 V by adjusting the volume VR1. At this time, if the surface of the black painted metal plate directly without placing any recording medium, the output is approximately 0.3 V. In the case of the coat paper, since the light cannot pass through the coat paper, the output level of the window portion will be 3.0 V all over the effective width of the recording.

On the other hand, in the case of OHP sheet, as shown by solid lines in FIG. 29, the window portion passes approximately 70 % of the light from the sensor 48 therethrough. The passed light will then reflect on the Ni-plated pseudo-mirror surface and the majority of the reflected light passes again the OHP paper, and thereafter entering the light receiving element of the sensor 48. As previously described with reference to FIG. 24,

this pseudo-mirror surface has a quite high reflection rate, which would make the detected output saturated. According to the circuit used in this embodiment shown in FIG. 20, the upper limit of the output level is 4.2 V, above which voltage any output level would be saturated at. Therefore, in the case of the OHP sheet, the output level at the window portion is saturated as shown in FIG. 29. Further, the other portions than the window portion of the OHP sheet are equivalent to a point of $\alpha = -6$ degrees in FIG. 25 because of being inclined by $\phi = 6$ degrees as shown in FIG. 22, thereby leading to 1 V approximately. However, this value of 1V contains, as previously mentioned, dispersive factors due the directive dispersion inherent in the sensor or the sensor mounting inaccuracy. Therefore, in this embodiment, when the level difference ΔV_o between the output level at the window part and that at the other parts is larger than a predetermined value C, as shown in FIG. 29, the paper kind is judged as OHP.

As mentioned above, if the pseudo-mirror surface is also inclined by an angle ϕ such that the relationship between the pseudo-mirror surface and the light-emitting/receiving approximates to a regular reflection, the detected output level at the window portion will be more highly assured.

If there is no paper due to exhaustion etc., the output would be as indicated by an alternate long and short dash line in FIG. 29, the output at the window portion is saturated by the upper limit while the other parts would have an output level of the black-coated portion.

As could be understood from the aforementioned explanation, according to the printer of the present invention, it is possible to distinguish the kind of the recording medium and to detect the effective recording width of the recording medium. Therefore, disadvantages such that erroneous recording is made on a black coated metal plate without no paper set thereon to make the inside of the apparatus dirty can be securely avoided.

Further according to the present invention, it is also possible to determine whether the front end of the recording medium has been fed to a predetermined position, and whether the rear end of the recording medium has passed the predetermined position.

Thus, according to the present invention, only a single sensor can perform such various operations as the judgment of the presence of the recording medium to be used in the recording apparatus, judgment of the kind of the recording medium, detection of the effective recording width, thereby enabling to simplify, minimize in size and lower the cost of the apparatus so as to improve the cost performance.

An embodiment of the present invention in which an operator recording operation is performed on a heat material end portion will now be described with reference to the drawings. FIG. 30 shows a schematic composition of an image recording apparatus according to the fifth embodiment of the present invention, while FIG. 31 is a cross-sectional view of the apparatus body. As shown in FIG. 31, a cassette 103 in which a plurality of sheet members 102 are accumulated is disposed at the bottom portion of the image recording apparatus body 101. In FIG. 31, at the left hand side, there is disposed a carriage 105 incorporating a recording head 104 under which a platen 106 is provided.

The recording head 104 is of an ink jet type for recording on a sheet member 102. There is formed m ink jet openings at the rear end of the ink ejecting section 115 which has an ink chamber therein to eject ink drops in response to image signal from the m number of ejection openings. A carriage motor is coupled to the carriage through a timing belt not shown, said carriage 105 reciprocally moving along a guide shaft 105a by the carriage driving motor.

To normally joint the recordings to correctly joint the recordings at the respective, however, a quite severe requirement, e.g. an high accuracy would be imposed on a person to feed the sheet member 102 by the feeding roller 107.

In the recording apparatus, when the paper feeding roller 111 rotates by the feeding signal, only the most upper one sheet member 102 is separated to be fed between the pair of paper feeding guides 109 and 110.

Subsequently, the sheet member 102 is guided by the paper feeding guides 109 and 110, being held between the conveying lower roller 107 and the conveying upper roller 108 rotating passively following to the conveying lower roller 107.

For the sheet at this time, the sensor arm 119-1 is in such a state as shown by the solid lines shown in FIG. 31, and the light from the light-emitting section of the transparent-type sensor 119-2 reaches the light receiving sensor. Meanwhile, during non-detection time, the sensor arm 119-1 would become as shown by the dotted lines, and the light from the light emitting section is shut down by the sensor arm. Due to this change of the state, the sheet sensor 119 composed of a sensor arm 119-1 and the transparent-type sensor 119-2 detect the rear end of the sheet.

Next, the sheet member 102 further passes through a platen 106 in virtue of the force given by the conveying lower roller 107, 108 to be led to the tension upper and lower rollers 112 and 113, and the rear end of the sheet member 102 conducted between the tension upper roller 112 and 113, thereby stopping the operation temporarily.

Although the tension lower roller 112 rotates interlocking with the conveying lower roller 107, the conveying

amount is set a little larger, and a proper tension is applied to the sheet member 102 to prevent its undesirable relaxation, since the holding force for the sheet member 102 is set to be weakened by the upper and lower conveying rollers 107 and 108.

In this state, the recording medium, moving in the direction from the leading side to the rear side in FIG. 31, performs the recording operation on the sheet member 102 with a constant width (recording width) by ejecting ink thereon in response to the image signals. The recording width W is represented by $m \times d$ where d is a dot diameter and m is the number of ink ejecting openings.

Each time that the recording operation for one line is completed, the sheet material 102 is fed in steps by the same amount as the recording width thereof by the conveying upper and lower rollers 107, 108, for the recording of the next line. The conveying mechanism is shown in detail in FIG. 30.

A series of the above-described operations are iterated to advance the recording operation on the sheet member 102. When the rear end of the sheet member 102 is detected by the paper sensor 119 passing through the conveying upper and lower rollers 107, 108 during the stepped feeding, there is a part of the operation in which the recording member is fed only by the pair of the tension upper and lower rollers 112 and 113. To prevent an excessive feeding caused by such a structure, it is possible to reduce the rotating angle of the drive motor for controlling the feeding amount thereof, and correspondingly to reduce the number of ink ejecting openings such that the mutual relationship of the recording at each step may be adjusted.

On completion of the recording operation for one sheet member 102, the sheet member 102 is discharged through the tension upper and lower rollers 112 and 113 to the paper discharging tray 114. In the shown embodiment, the numeral 117 designates a paper width sensor composed of a reflection-type sensor. This sensor is mounted on the carriage 105 to detect a range over which the sheet is present when the carriage once reciprocally moves on the sheet member, in advance of starting the recording operation after conveyed toward the position above the platen 106. In virtue of this operation, the range for ink ejection is restricted so as not to allow undesirable ink ejection on a portion of no sheet member, preventing the apparatus from made dirty.

FIG. 33 is a block diagram showing the control section of the recording apparatus shown in FIG. 30.

In FIG. 30, the numerals designate respectively: 201, an up-counter for counting up a pixel clock and reset by a pixel block clock. The pixel block clock represents an effective area of the image data, and is equivalent to 128 pixel clocks; 202, a register having a printing dot position correcting value for the printing dot position which is set by a CPU 206; 203, a comparator for comparing a counted value in the up-counter 201 and the correcting value of the printing dot position correcting value set in the register 202, and generating an output X when both values are equal or the counted value is larger; 204, an AND gate for AND-calculating the output value of the comparator 203, the pixel clocks, and the pixel block clocks; 200, a FiFo memory for temporarily storing the image data, into which the image data is written synchronously with the pixel clocks and the written data is then read out in synchronicity with the output signal from the AND gate 204; 205, an image memory-/head driving section for storing the image data sent from the FiFo memory 200 and driving the recording head in accordance with the stored image data; 208, a pulse motor for scanning the recording head; 209, a pulse motor for paper feeding (hereinafter referred to as "driving motor"); 207, a motor driving section for driving the pulse motors 208 and 209 in accordance with the rear end amount obtained by the detecting operation of the paper sensor for the rear end of the sheet member.

In this embodiment, the conditions are set as follows:

- * dot diameter d : 0.0635 mm
- * number of ink ejecting openings m : 128
- * recording width $W (= m \times d)$: 8.128 mm
- * number of pulses n required to feed by the recording width W : 96 pulses
- * conveyed amount t by the conveying roller at one pulse $(= W/n)$: approximately 0.0847 mm/pulse
- * conveying amount ratio of the tension rollers 112 and 113 to the conveying rollers 107 and 108: 1.01
- * conveying amount of the sheet member by the conveying roller on starting the recording operation: 20 mm
- * distance a from the conveying rollers 107 and 108 to the detecting point of the sensor arm 119-1: 10.128 mm
- * distance from the conveying rollers 107 and 108 to the ink ejecting section: 11 mm

A method for conveying the sheet member 102 will now be described in detail.

The sheet member 102 is fed by the conveying upper and lower rollers 107 and 108 by 20 mm and then stopped to become in a state as shown in FIG. 32 for detecting the width of the sheet member 102 aforementioned. Thereafter, the sheet member 102 is fed by the same amount 8.128 mm as the recording width W by the conveying lower roller 107 every time one line of the recording is completed by the recording head 104. These operations are iterated on the sheet member 102. When the paper sensor 119 detects that the rear end of the sheet member 102 reaches a position near the conveying lower roller 107, the size of the sheet member

is determined from the paper width and the number of conveying steps needed until detecting the rear end of the sheet member by the paper sensor. In the following TABLE 1, there are shown: Width corresponding to sheets of various sizes; Number of paper feeding steps until the paper sensor 119 detects the rear end; and Remained amount of the sheet member from the conveying roller 107 when detected by the paper sensor.

TABLE I is a diagram showing a relationship between a width corresponding to sheet materials of respective size and number of steps until detecting the rear end of the sheet and remained amount of the sheet.

TABLE I

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
B4 257x364	257mm	344mm	42times	2.624mm
A4 210x297	210mm	277mm	33times	8.776mm
8.5x11inch 215.9x279.4	215.9mm	259.4mm	31times	7.432mm
B5 182x257	182mm	237mm	28times	9.416mm
5.5x8.5inch 139.7x215.9	139.7mm	195.9mm	23times	8.956mm
A5 148x210	148mm	190mm	23times	3.056mm
B6 128x182	128mm	162mm	19times	7.568mm
A6 105x148	105mm	128mm	15times	6.08mm

For example, if the width is 210 mm and the number of steps needed until the rear end detection by the paper sensor 119 is 33, the paper size is determined as A3, such that the driving motor and the number of the ink ejecting openings are controlled properly for the remained amount 8.776 mm of the rear end of the sheet member.

The driving motor and the number of the ink ejecting openings are controlled in a manner as disclosed in Japanese Patent Application No. 2-272394. In this embodiment, the following five kinds of controlling operations are carried out;

- (1) Number of feeding pulses by the driving motor: 95 Printing dot position correction: 0 dot (no correction)
- (2) Number of feeding pulses by the driving motor: 95 Printing dot position correction: 1 dot
- (3) Number of feeding pulses by the driving motor: 94 Printing dot position correction: 2 dots
- (4) Number of feeding pulses by the driving motor: 93 Printing dot position correction: 3 dots
- (5) Number of feeding pulses by the driving motor: 95 Printing dot position correction: 0 dot

For example, the control of above-noted item (2) is to set the number of feeding pulses by the driving motor 209 from normally 96 to 95 pulses, to set the feeding amount by steps to 95/96 of normal amount, and not to perform the ejecting operation of one nozzle (opening) among the ink ejecting openings located at the most downstream side.

The other items of the control listed above also perform, in the similar manner as (2), the number of feeding pulses by the driving motor and the number of ink ejecting openings.

In FIG. 34, the horizontal axis represents the remained amount of the rear end of the sheet member from the conveying lower roller when the above-mentioned five kinds of controls are performed, while the vertical axis represents the errors in combining the recordings. The positive (+) error represents a gap between the dots while the negative (-) error represents an overlapping of the dots. To perform the recording operation, that having the smallest error among the five control modes (1) - (5) is selected in accordance with the remained amount of the rear end of the sheet.

For example, if the sheet member is determined as of A4 size, the remained amount of the rear end would be 8.776 mm. Therefore, in the subsequent stepping feeding control is performed, as in the normal operation, with 8.128 mm of feeding and with 128 nozzles to be used. At this time, the remained amount of the rear end would be 8.776 mm - 8.128 mm = 0.648 mm, and then the control of the item (4) is carried out to record 0.009 mm of error. In the next recording, since the rear end of the sheet member will be completely out of the conveying lower roller 7 and be fed only by the tension lower roller 12, the state could be considered to be substantially the same as the case with no remained amount of the rear end so as to perform the recording by the item (5) with an error of approximately 0.004 mm. However, in practice, since the rear end of the sheet member would be fed by approximately 15.4 mm from the conveying lower roller 7 so as to enter the recording

section, the recording operation of (5) cannot be performed, so the recording operation finishes. Likewise, if the width is 148 mm and the number of feeding steps until the paper sensor detects the rear end of the sheet is 23, the paper size is A5 with the remained amount of the rear end of 3.056 mm. In this case, the item (3) is selected for the controlling operation to perform the recording with an error of approximately 0.007 mm.

In this embodiment, since the gap between the conveying lower roller 7 and the ink ejecting section is 11 mm, when the rear end of the sheet member is come out of the conveying lower roller 7 and fed by more than approximately 2.96 mm, the next step of recording operation cannot be performed since the recording section does not engage with the sheet member. Further, if the width is 139.7 mm and the number of feeding steps until the paper sensor 119 detects the rear end is 23, it becomes as 5.5 x 8.5 inches with the remained amount of the rear end of 8.956 mm. In this case, in the next step the item (1) of no correction is carried out to feed 8.128 mm, with the remained amount of the rear end of 0.828 mm at this time. Here, the control of the item (4) can be performed to record with an error of approximately 0.007 mm. For two sheets of 5.5 x 8.5 inch size and of A5 size, the number of steps until the paper sensor detection is the same, 23, but the remained amounts of the rear end are mutually different, so the optimum control for the respective sheet is also different. This judgment is made by detecting the paper width. For the other sheet members of various sizes, the remained amount of the rear end is also detected by the width of the sheet member and the number of steps until the paper sensor 119 detects the rear end to allow the most optimum control operation suitable for the remained amount of the rear end as shown in FIG. 34 so as to record for combination with high accuracy.

FIGS. 35 and 36 are flow diagrams showing the controlling sequence of the present apparatus executed by the CPU 206. In step S201, the CPU 206 waits for an order to start the copying operation. In response to the order for starting, the CPU 206 controls to convey the sheet member until a position separated by 20 mm from the conveying lower roller 7 in step S202. In step S203, the finish of the paper feeding is waited for. Then in step S204, the pulse motor 208 is driven to make the carriage 105 scan and make the paper width sensor 117 detect the width of the sheet member to detect its form size, thereby shifting to a copying mode (step S205) corresponding to the respective size. In step S205, a recording control operation in accordance with the respective form size is carried out.

FIG. 35 shows a control sequence in a copy mode for A4 size. Firstly, in step S210, the carriage 105 is moved and an ink is ejected from the ink ejecting section to perform the recording for the first line. In step S211, it is judged if the paper sensor 119 is turned on or off. If the paper sensor 119 is turned off (sheet not detected), it is not of A4 size so as not to advance any more, and the process shifts to a paper discharging sub-routine in step S206. In step S211, if the paper sensor 119 is turned on (detecting sheet), the driving motor performs step feeding by 96 pulses in step S212, and in step S2123 the second line is recorded. Next it is judged whether the paper sensor 119 is turned on or off, and in case of turned off the process finishes as in step S211 and advances to the paper discharging sub-routine in step S206, while in case of turned on the step feeding of 96 pulses by the driving motor 109 is performed in step S215. Thereafter in step S214, the steps through S213 - S215 is iterated until the paper sensor 119 is turned off or until $n = 33$ to continue the recording operation. In step S216 the 34th line is recorded, and in step S217 it is determined whether the paper sensor 119 is turned on or off, and in case of turned on, this means that the paper size is not A4 so as to finish the process. In case of turned off, it is ascertained that the paper size is A4, so that the step feeding of 96 pulses by the driving motor 109 is carried out in step S218, and in step S219 the 35th line is recorded. Subsequently, the recording of the 36th line in which the three pixel correction is executed is carried out in step S221 to end the process, and then it shifts to the paper discharging sub-routine in step S206 shown in FIG. 35.

In step S206 the paper is discharged, and in step S207 the completion of the paper discharge is waited, and then the process shifts to the paper feeding sub-routine in step S202, and returns to the initial stand-by state if the copying is not continued.

Although in FIG. 36 the case in which the paper width is judged as A4 has been described, the process is basically the same even when the size of the paper is judged as other form size. The differences are the line corresponding to n in step S213, the line to which the recording of step S216 corresponds, and the paper feeding and recording operation in steps S218 - S221 depending on the size, only.

In the above-mentioned embodiment, the description has been related to an image recording apparatus using only sheet members of form size, but in the sixth embodiment of the present invention non-form size sheet can be used.

FIG. 37 shows a schematic view showing an image recording apparatus of this embodiment, in which the distance from the conveying lower roller to the detecting point of the sensor arm 119-1 is 14.055 mm. The other composition is the same as that of the fifth embodiment.

The following TABLE 2 shows, for the respective sheet size,; Width; number of steps until the paper sensor 119 detects the sheet member; and remained amount of the sheet member from the conveying lower roller 107 when the sheet member is detected by the paper sensor 119.

TABLE II is a diagram showing a relationship between the width corresponding to the sheet materials of the respective size and number of steps until detecting the rear end and remained amount according to the sixth embodiment of the present invention.

TABLE II

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
B4 257x364	257mm	344mm	41times	10.752mm
A4 210x297	210mm	277mm	33times	8.776mm
8.5x11inch 215.9x279.4	215.9mm	259.4mm	31times	7.432mm
B5 182x257	182mm	237mm	28times	9.416mm
5.5x8.5inch 139.7x215.9	139.7mm	195.9mm	23times	8.956mm
A5 148x210	148mm	190mm	22times	11.184mm

5	B6 128x162	128mm	162mm	19times	7.568mm
10	A6 105x148	105mm	128mm	15times	6.03mm

(1): Size of the sheet member

15 (2): width of the sheet member

(3): Remained amount after conveyed 20mm

(4): Number of steps until the sensor detection

20 (5): Remained amount at the sensor detection

25 For formal sized sheet members, the optimum controlling operation is carried out on the basis of the width and the number of steps until the sensor detection of the rear end in TABLE 2, in the same manner as in the fifth embodiment.

FIG. 38 shows a relationship between the remained amount at the rear end and the combining error in each control of the sixth embodiment. In this case, the line shown at the position with a remained amount 5.927 mm represents the detecting point of the paper sensor 119-1. Although the actual detecting point lies at a position separated by 14.055 mm from the conveying lower roller 107, it is shown in the drawing at a position deviated by a feeding amount for one step, 8.128 mm for descriptive convenience.

When non-form size sheet member is conveyed, the width of the sheet member and the number of steps until the paper sensor 119 detects the rear end of the sheet member does not have such a relationship as shown in TABLE 2. In this case, at the time when the paper sensor 19 detects the rear end of the sheet member, the remained amount x of the rear end would be $5.927 \leq x < 14.055$. The subsequent step feeding is the normal one, the item (1) of the previous list, for feeding 8.128 mm.

In such a state, the remained amount x at the rear end would be $-2.201 \leq x < 5.927$. Here, when the x is negative (-), the rear end is at the downstream side of the conveying lower roller 107, representing that the sheet member is come out of the conveying lower roller 107 and fed by the tension roller 112. Therefore, on terminating this step, if the remained amount x of the rear end is in the range of $0 \leq x < 5.927$, the combining error is zero. Meanwhile, $-2.201 \leq x < 0$ i.e. when the paper sensor 119 detects the rear end of the sheet member the remained amount of the rear end is measured in the range of $5.927 \leq x < 8.128$, the error of the control (1) in the range of $5.927 \leq x < 8.128$ would be in the range of $0 - 22.01 \mu\text{m}$. In the subsequent step, the control of the item (3) is carried out. If the remained amount x of the rear end when the control (3) is performed is in the range of $-2.201 \leq x < 0$, the error would be $37.25 \mu\text{m}$ likewise the rear end amount 0 mm in FIG. 38, and in the range of $0 \leq x < 5.927$ the error range would be within $-22.02 \mu\text{m} - 37.25 \mu\text{m}$.

In this manner, even for non-form sized sheet material, reliable recording combination with less error can be achieved by setting the detecting point of the paper sensor 119 to a proper position, and by judging as non-formed sized sheet from the width of the sheet and the number of steps until the paper sensor 119 detects the rear end thereof.

FIGS. 39 - 41 are flow diagrams showing the controlling sequences embodying the sixth embodiment of the present invention. In step S301, a copy starting order is waited for. In response to the starting order, the sheet member is conveyed until a position separated by 20 mm from the conveying lower roller 107, and then the completion of the paper feeding is waited in step S303. In step S304, the pulse motor 208 is driven to allow the carriage 105 scan while the paper width sensor 117 detect the width of the sheet member to determine the corresponding form size, and then the process shifts to a copying mode (step S305) corresponding to the respective size. In step S305, recording operations corresponding to the respective form size are carried out. In case of non-form sized sheet, the process shifts to a non-form sized sheet mode shown in FIG. 41.

FIG. 40 shows a controlling sequence for A4 size sheet. Firstly in step S310, the carriage 105 is driven and an ink is ejected from the ink ejecting section to perform recording on the first line, and in step S311 the paper sensor 119 is determined whether being turned on or off. If the paper sensor 119 is turned off i.e. no sheet member is detected, this means that the sheet is not A4 size, but therefore non-form size. As a result,

the process shifts to step S326 where step feeding of 96 pulses is carried out by the driving motor 209 as a controlling operation for non-form size sheet. In step S311, if the paper sensor 119 detects the turned on state i.e. the sheet member, a step feeding of 96 pulses is performed by the driving motor 209 in step S312.

Then in step S313, the second line is recorded. And the paper sensor 119 determines whether it is turned on or off state, and in case of turned off, the sheet is determined as non-form size in the same manner as in step S311, and the process shifts to step S326. In case of turned on, a step feeding of 96 pulses by the driving motor 209 is performed in step S315. Thereafter, in step S314, the steps S313 through S315 are iterated until the paper sensor 119 turns off or until $n = 33$ to continue the recording operation. In step S316 the 34th line is recorded, and in step S317 it is determined whether the paper sensor 119 is turned on or off. In case of turned on, it is non-form size so that the rear end does not yet reach the paper sensor 119, the normal step feeding of 96 pulses is carried out in step S322. In the next step S323 nth ($35 \leq n$) line is recorded, and in step S324 it is judged whether the paper sensor 119 is turned on or off. In case of turned on, a step feeding of 96 pulses is performed in step S325, and returns to step S323 to perform the recording. In step S324, the process continues until the paper sensor 119 turns off, and after it is turned off, a step feeding of 96 pulses is carried out by the driving motor 209 in step S326, and thereafter the normal recording operation is executed in step S327. In step S328 a step feeding of 94 pulses is carried out as the control (3), in step S329 the recording for two pixel correction is performed, and then the process shifts to the paper discharging sub-routine in step S306. In step S317, if the paper sensor 119 is turned off, the sheet size is judged to be A4 size, and then the same controlling operation as in steps S218 - S221 in the fifth embodiment is carried out in steps S318 - S321, and then the process shifts to the paper discharging sub-routine in step S306.

If the sheet is judged to be non-form size in step S304, the control would be as shown in FIG. 41. Firstly in step S330, the carriage 105 is moved and an ink is ejected from the ink ejecting opening to perform the recording on the first line, and in step S331 it is determined whether the paper sensor 119 is turned on or off. In case of turned off, the process shifts to step S336 for the controlling operation of the rear end, while in case of turned on this means that the rear end does not yet reach the paper sensor 119, a normal step feeding of 96 pulses is carried out in step S332.

Next in step S332 nth ($2 \leq n$) line is recorded, and in step S324 it is determined whether the paper sensor 119 is turned off or on. In case of turned on, a step feeding of 96 pulses is performed in step S335, and then the process returns to step S333 to perform the recording. The recording is continued until the paper sensor 119 is turned off in step S334. After turning off of the sensor, a step feeding of 96 pulses is performed by the driving motor 209 in step S336 as a control (1) for the rear end of non-form sized sheet, and in step S337 the normal recording operation is carried out. As the control (3), in step S338 a step feeding of 94 pulses is performed by the driving motor 209, and in step S339 the two pixel correction is performed, and then the process shifts to the paper discharging sub-routine in step S306 to discharge the sheet. The completion of the discharging operation is waited in step S307, and in step S308 it is judged whether it is continuous copying mode or not, and in case of the continuous copying mode the process shifts to the paper feeding sub-routine in step S302, and otherwise it returns to the initial stand-by state.

Although the sheet member is fed in the longitudinal direction in both fifth and sixth embodiment, if there are included widthwise feeding sheets, for example, the widths for widthwise feeding of A5 size and for the longitudinal feeding of A4 size are both 210 mm. In the fifth embodiment, the number of steps for the rear end detection would be 33 and 15 times. Therefore, if the number of steps in case of width of 210 mm is 33 it is judged as longitudinal feeding of A4 size, and if it is 15 in case of width of 210 mm it is judged as widthwise feeding of A5 size, to perform the optimum controlling operation.

In the aforementioned embodiment, although the control has been performed using the number of steps until the paper sensor 119 turns off, alternatively for example a time from the recording start to the turning off of the paper sensor 119 can be also used for the same purpose.

By providing a control means which varies both or either one of the conveying amount of the sheet conveying means and the recording area of the recording means on the basis of the width of the detected sheet member and the number of steps of conveying by the sheet conveying means until the detection of the rear end of the sheet, it is possible to perform highly accurate image recording even at the end portion of the sheet member.

Next, a seventh embodiment of the present invention will now be described. In this embodiment, the total number of ink ejecting openings of the recording head 4 is set larger than that used for the actual recording to change the using area of the entire ink ejecting opening (also called as injecting element) between before

and after the sheet passes through the conveying upper and lower rollers, thereby enabling to prevent any blank portion from generated between the lines so as to provide an accurate combination.

FIG. 42 shows a schematic view of an image recording apparatus according to the present embodiment. The numeral 101 designates an image recording apparatus body having a bottom portion on which a cassette 103 containing a plurality of accumulated sheet members 102. At the left-hand side of FIG. 42, a carriage incorporating a recording head 104 is disposed, and a platen 106 is located below the recording head 104.

The recording head is an ink jet type head in which a recording is performed on the sheet member 102 by applying thermal energy to the ink to generate state change so as to provide an injection of the ink drops. At the rear end of the injection element portion, there are provided m nozzles of the injection elements which contains an ink chamber not shown to output ink drops through the m injecting elements 116 in response to image signals. A carriage driving motor not shown is connected to the carriage through a timing belt, so the carriage 105 is reciprocally moved by the carriage driving motor along the guide shaft 105a.

To correctly combining the resulted record of each line, the feeding accuracy of the sheet member 102 by the conveying lower roller 107 should be significantly high. Therefore, the conveying lower roller 107 has an external diameter accurately finished, and a pulse motor having an excellent stopping accuracy is uses as a driving apparatus. The rotating angle is controlled by pulses.

In the recording apparatus, when the paper feeding roller 111 is rotated by the feeding signal, the most upper sheet of the sheet member 102 is separated and supplied between the paper feeding guides 109 and 110.

Next, the sheet member 102 is guided by the paper feeding guides 109 and 110 to be fed and held between a conveying lower roller 107 rotated by a not shown driving motor and a conveying upper roller 108 rotated dependently by the conveying lower roller 107.

Then, the sheet member 102 further passes through the platen 106 by the conveying force of the conveying lower and upper rollers 107 and 108 to the tension upper and lower rollers 112 and 113. When the rear end of the sheet member 102 is held between the tension upper and lower rollers 112 and 113, the feeding movement is temporarily stopped.

Although the tension lower roller 112 rotates interlocking with the conveying lower roller 107, since the conveying amount is set to a value somewhat larger than the actual amount and its sheet member holding force is set weaker than that of the conveying upper and lower rollers 107 and 108, a proper tension is applied to the sheet member 102 for preventing it from relaxed.

In this state, the recording head 104 moves from the leading side in Fig. 42 toward the rear side by the carriage 105, and injects ink in response to the image signal to provide a recording of a constant width (recording width) on the sheet member 102. The recording width W can be expressed by $m \times p$ where p is a pitch between the injecting elements and b is the number of nozzles of the injecting elements.

Each time the recording of one line is terminated, the sheet member 102 is fed by the same amount W as the recording width by the conveying rollers to perform the recording for the next line.

By iterating the aforementioned operations, the recording operation continues on the sheet member 102, and upon terminating the recording operation for one sheet, the sheet member 102 is discharged through the tension upper and lower rollers 112 and 113 to the paper discharging trag. An example of the image recorded on the sheet member is shown in FIG. 43.

In the present embodiment, as shown in FIG. 44, the conditions are set as follows:

Pitch p between the injecting elements: 0.0635 mm

Number of nozzles of the injecting elements m1 used at recording: 128

Recording width W (= $m \times p$): 8.128 mm

Conveying amount L1 (= W) by the conveying roller for one step: 8.128 mm

Conveying amount L2 by the tension roller for one step: $8.128 + 0.0635 = 8.1915$ mm

Number of nozzles m2 for all the injecting elements ($m1 + 1$): 129

Each time that the 128 nozzles at the A portion near the conveying lower roller 107 among the 129 nozzles of the injecting elements of the recording head 104 completes the recording operation for one line (width W), the same amount L1 as the recording width W of the sheet is fed by the conveying lower roller 107.

After such a series of recording process is continued, when the rear end of the sheet member 102 comes out of the conveying upper and lower rollers 107 and 108, the sheet member 102 is conveyed by the tension roller 112. The conveying amount L2 (8.1915 mm) at this time is set to be larger than that L1 by the conveying lower roller 7 by 0.0635 mm equivalent to one pitch p between the injecting elements. Here, if the same recording operation as aforementioned is continued, since the portion a recorded before the step feeding is conveyed by an amount larger than the recording width W by 0.0635 mm as shown in FIG. 47, the rear end a1 of the a portion does not align with the front end portion of 128 nozzles at A portion but comes to a position advanced by one pitch of the injecting element in the paper feeding direction. Therefore, in such a state, the

128 nozzles of the injecting elements used for the recording is those of the B portion deviated by one pitch in the paper feeding direction, to realize blankless combination. In this case, the timing for changing the nozzles from A portion to B portion is determined by previously recognizing the step feeding in which the rear end of the sheet member 102 passes through the conveying upper lower rollers 107 and 108.

5 In this embodiment, since the gap between the conveying rollers 107, 108 and the injecting elements is small and therefore there is only one step of feeding after the rear end of the sheet member passes through the conveying rollers 107, 108, the number of nozzles of the injecting elements is set to be larger by one than that of the injecting element actually used in recording, 128. But if the gap is large and there are more than two steps of feeding after that, it is possible to provide a head having more nozzles by the number of that steps, and to move the nozzle to be used one by one in accordance with the times of conveying by the tension rollers 112 and 113.

Further in this embodiment, if the length of the sheet member is not constant, it is possible to dispose a sensor for detecting the sheet member at the upstream side of the conveying lower roller to detect the rear end of the sheet member 102 so as to determine the timing for changing the injecting elements to be used.

15 Further in this embodiment, although the conveying amount L2 by the tension roller 112 is set to be larger than that L1 by the conveying lower roller 107 by an amount equivalent to one pitch p between the injecting elements, it is alternatively also possible to set it to be larger by a plurality of pitches such that the injecting elements to be used for recording are shifted by the set pitch each time.

The eighth embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to FIGS. 46 - 48. In this embodiment, tension rollers 117 and 118 are provided at the upstream side of the recording section, while conveying rollers 107 and 108 are provided at the downstream side. The sheet member 102 is firstly conveyed by the tension rollers 117 and 118, and then stopped in the state shown in FIG. 46. Among 129 nozzles of the injecting elements, 128 nozzles of C portion located at the downstream side are used to perform the recording operation with the recording width W (8. 128 mm). Subsequently, a feeding of a conveying amount L3: 8. 128 mm - 0. 0635 mm (= 8. 0645 mm) is carried out by the tension rollers 118 and 117 (FIG. 47). In this case, the rear end b1 of the recording section b recorded by the nozzles of C portion is not aligned with the front end portion of the 128 nozzles of C portion, but reaches a position at the upstream side by 0. 0635 mm. Therefore, the next recording is performed by using 128 nozzles of D portion deviated by one nozzle toward the upstream side from the C portion.

30 In the conveying of the sheet member 102 in the next step, since the rear end of the sheet member is fed from immediately before the nips of the conveying rollers 107 and 108, the conveying amount would be 8. 128 mm. Therefore, when the sheet member 102 is fed to the conveying lower roller 107, as shown in FIG. 48, the injecting elements used for the recording operation would be the 128 nozzles of the D portion to achieve the recording operation even to the rear end of the sheet member 102.

35 In this embodiment although the number of injecting elements are set to 129, but when several steps are required until the rear end of the sheet member enters the conveying rollers due to a large gap between the injecting elements and the conveying rollers, it is possible to provide a head having more nozzles by the number of steps and to shift the nozzles to be used sequentially.

A ninth embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to FIGS. 51 - 53. In this embodiment, the recording head 104 is fixed to the body during the recording operation, and there are (m + 6) nozzles of the injecting elements perpendicular to the paper feeding direction. During the sheet member 102 is continuously conveyed on the platen 106 by the conveying rollers 107, 108 and the tension rollers 112, 113, the recording operation is carried out by the m nozzles of the injecting elements of the E portion with a width of m x p (pitch between the injecting elements) as shown in FIG. 52. At this time, when the sheet member 102 is deviated in the direction (shown by arrow) perpendicular to the paper feeding direction due to curling thereof etc. before conveyed by the conveying rollers 107 and 108, this deviation is detected by a position sensor not shown to change the injecting elements to be used for the recording to m nozzles of F portion. Although the shifted amount is equivalent to only one nozzle in FIG. 53, it is possible to vary the amount to be shifted in accordance with the detected value to perform the recording on the center of the sheet member 102.

50 As described above, by providing the injecting elements in a number larger than that of the injecting elements equivalent to the recording width, it is possible to select the injecting elements to be used for the recording in accordance with the state of the recording medium, and to perform highly accurate recording by changing the recording position when the end portion of the sheet member is recorded.

In this manner, according to the present invention, a proper recording operation can be applied even to the sheet end portion, enabling a highly accurate image combination.

Next, an embodiment in which the floating of the recording member at the recording area is prevented to achieve high-grade recoding will now be described.

FIG. 54 is a cross-sectional view showing a tenth embodiment of the ink jet recording apparatus according

to the present invention.

As shown in FIG. 54, a recording medium such as a coat paper cut out in a predetermined magnitude or a clear sheet for OHP paper is contained in a cassette 302 which is removably mounted on the bottom portion of the body 301. A pick-up roller 304 is provided above one end of the recording medium 303, and two guide plates 305a, 305b are provided in vicinity of the pick-up roller 304. At the left-hand side of two guide plates 305a, 305b, a pair of paper feeding rollers 306a, 306b as a paper feeding means and a pair of paper discharging rollers 308a, 308b are arranged in order. The conveying means is composed of these paper feeding means and paper discharging means. At the left-hand side of the pair of paper discharging rollers 308a, 308b, a paper discharging tray 809 is removably mounted to project externally from the body 301. On the guide plate 305a, a paper feeding sensor 310 is disposed in vicinity of the paper feeding roller 306a. On the other hand, a paper discharging sensor 311 is disposed at a position near the right hand side of the paper discharging roller 308a. Each of the paper feeding sensor 310 and the paper discharging sensor 311 is composed a type in which a reflecting light from the recording medium 303 is read by a reflection type photosensor provided against the recording medium and a type in which the shift of a movable lever in contact with the recording medium 303 is detected by a photosensor or a microswitch. Though not shown, directly near the paper discharging tray 309 side of the paper discharging roller 308a, a movable lever of the paper discharging sensor 311 is provided for detecting the rear end of the recording medium inserted through the paper discharging tray 309 in case of manually inserting mode as described later.

The carriage 312 is slidably coupled to a guide shaft 313 provided on the body 301 in parallel to the paper feeding roller 306a, and reciprocally moved in the paper width direction (arrow B direction and its reverse direction) perpendicular to the conveying direction (arrow A direction) in which the recording medium 303 on the platen. The carriage 312 has a recording head 314 removably provided thereon for ejecting ink from an ejecting opening (not shown) to perform recording. The ejecting surface 314a on which the ejecting opening 314a is opened is opposed to the platen 7 with a predetermined gap (e.g. 0.75 mm) therebetween. Just near the ejecting opening surface 314a, a paper width sensor 315 is provided on the carriage 312, composed of a reflection type photosensor for emitting light and reading the amount of reflected light. On a part of the path of the emitted light from the paper width sensor 315 on the platen, a silver plate 316 having a nickel-plated coated thereon for increasing the amount of reflecting light is provided. The other surface of the platen 307 is zinc-plated in black color for reducing the reflecting light amount. The paper width sensor 315 and the ejecting opening of the recording head 314 are separated by a distance equal to the distance between the rear end of the recording medium 303 and the rear end of the recordable area in the leading/rear ends mode in the conveying direction.

Next, the operation when the recording medium 303 is conveyed will now be described. The recording medium 303 is fed between the two guide plates 305a, 305b, and its rear end reaches nip portions of a pair of paper feeding rollers 306a, 306b. Thereafter, the recording medium 303 is held and conveyed between the paper feeding rollers 306a and 306b rotating in the arrow direction in FIG. 54 so as to be fed in the conveying direction (arrow A direction) along the platen 307. The recording medium having passed through the platen 307 is then held and conveyed between the paper discharging rollers 308a and 308b rotating in the arrow direction in FIG. 54 in synchronicity with the paper feeding rollers 306a and 306b and discharged to the paper discharging tray 309. The recording head 314 is moved by the carriage 312 and perform recording on the recording medium 303 on the platen 307. Further, in case of manual inserting recording operation, the recording medium is inserted along the discharging tray 309 and when it reaches the nip portions of the paper discharging rollers 308a and 308b, they are sensed by the movable lever (not shown) of the paper discharging sensor 311, and the paper discharging rollers 308a and 308b rotates in the reverse direction of that of arrow (FIG. 54), thereby feeding the recording medium 303 by a predetermined amount along the platen 307 in the reverse direction of the arrow A direction. At this time, the paper feeding rollers 306a and 306b also rotates in synchronicity with the paper discharging rollers 308a and 308b in the reverse direction of the arrow direction (FIG. 54). After the recording medium 303 is fed to a predetermined position, the recording medium 303 will be conveyed in the arrow A direction in accordance with the recording operation by the recording head 314 and then discharged on the paper discharging tray 309.

FIG. 55 is a flow diagram of the operation of the ink jet recording apparatus in case of manual paper feeding. When the manual paper feeding starts, the SUS plate at the paper feeding side is gone up. Next, a sub-scanning motor is reversely rotated (the paper feeding roller and the paper discharging roller are reversely rotated).

Then, the turning on of the paper feeding sensor is checked and the SUS plate having been raised is lowered. If the paper feeding sensor does not turn on even after a predetermined time from the rotation start, a jamming process is taken.

When the paper feeding sensor is turned on, the rotation of both rollers are stopped. Next, the carriage shifts to the S position. As shown in FIG. 56, the base wheel of the carriage presses both pressing members of the paper feeding and paper discharging sides.

After the carriage is stopped at the S position, the sub-scanning motor (paper feeding roller and the paper discharging roller) rotates reversely. This rotation continues until the paper discharging sensor turns off. If the paper discharging sensor does not turn off even after a predetermined time has passed, the jamming process is taken.

5 When the paper discharging sensor is turned off, both rollers are stopped at 10 pulses and the carriage moves to the SP position. When the carriage stops at SP position, the sub-motor will be rotated for 48 pulses for the paper feeding, thereby finishing the paper feeding operation.

The SUS plate (pressing member) 317 at the paper feeding side is raised and lowered by a solenoid. This solenoid is used in common with the paper feeding solenoid for controlling the pick-up roller.

10 As shown in FIG. 57, a hole is formed on the platen at a position slightly separated from the position through which the paper passes. Therefore, when the solenoid functions, the lever is raised from the lower side of the platen upwardly. The SUS plate can be raised to a sufficient height by this lever.

To lower the SUS plate, the solenoid is turned off to lower the lever, thereby the SUS plate naturally come down on the platen.

15 FIG. 57A is a drawing for the explanation of the state when the paper feeding solenoid is turned off (normal state). FIG. 57B is a drawing for the explanation of the state when the paper feeding solenoid is turned on (the lever is raised). FIG. 57C is a drawing for the explanation of the SUS plate up lever hole and the paper feeding area.

20 After the carriage is shifted to the S point in step S410, the sub-motor is driven to continue the paper feeding operation, for the purpose of enhancing the accuracy for detecting the paper end by the paper discharging sensor in step S411. This is the key point of this embodiment.

By pressing the paper on the platen through the SUS plate by the carriage as shown in FIG. 58B, the detecting timing by the paper discharging sensor can be improved to accurately position the paper in the manual feeding mode.

25 The state in which the paper feeding sensor is turned on and the SUS plate is come down (step S306 in the flow diagram in FIG. 53) signifies that when the sensor is turned on, it can be ascertained that the rear end side of the paper is completely entered below the SUS plate at the paper feeding roller side, according to the composition of this invention.

30 FIG. 57 is a flow diagram of the paper feeding operation in RHS mode. In response to the paper feeding order, the carriage shifts to the SP point in step S501, and in step S502 the sub-motor is rotated for 48 pulses. In step S503 the paper feeding solenoid is turned on, and in step S504 the sub-scan motor is rotated for 232 pulses. In step S505 the paper feeding solenoid is turned off, and in step S506 the presence of the paper is checked by the paper feeding sensor. In step S508 the sub-motor is reversely rotated for 65 pulses, and in step S509 (aimed at diagonally traveling) the sub-motor is forwardly rotated by 223 pulses, and in step S510

35 the carriage moves to the S point. After the shifting of the carriage to the S point, the SUS plate is in a state of pressing the paper. In step S511 the sub-scan motor is rotated forwardly for 66 pulses. After this operation, the rear end of the paper is entered into the paper discharging rollers. In step S512, the carriage shifts to the SP point. In step S513, the paper discharging sensor checks the presence or absence of the paper.

40 If the paper is present, the paper feeding operation is completed.

FIG. 58 shows the OHP paper feeding mode.

The OHP paper feeding mode according to the present invention consists of only manual paper feeding mode. In case of OHP mode, both pressing members 316 and 317 at the paper discharging side and the paper feeding side are in a state as shown in FIG. 59. Further, the space between the paper discharging rollers 308a

45 and 308b is increased. Therefore, the control operation in the OHP manual paper feeding is different from that in the coated paper feeding.

50 When the OHP manual paper feeding starts, in step S601 the carriage shifts to the SP point. In step S602 the timer starts and the sub-scan motor is reversely rotated. In step S304 it is checked whether the paper feeding sensor is turned on or off. In case of turned off, a state of "wait" is taken to check the sensor. After finishing the timer operation, the jamming process starts.

In case of turned on of the paper feeding sensor, in step S607 the timer is restarted and in step S608 it is checked whether the paper discharging sensor is turned off.

55 The checking operation performed until the sensor is turned off is carried out in the same manner as in case of the paper feeding sensor.

When the paper feeding sensor is turned off, the sub-scan motor is rotated for 84 pulses and then stopped, and thereafter the sub-motor is forwardly rotated by 48 pulses to advance the paper. Then it is checked if the paper discharging sensor is turned on. If the sensor is turned on, the paper feeding operation is completed.

In the OHP manual paper feeding mode, such a control as feeding the paper while pressing the SUS plate by the carriage is not performed due to the following reasons:

1. No SUS plate (pressing member) is on the platen; and
2. The distance between the pair of the paper discharging rollers is larger than that in case of coated paper.

FIG. 60 is a controlling flow diagram for the printing operation in the coated paper mode. In step S701, the first band is printed. In step S702, the carriage shifts to the S point. In step S708, the paper is conveyed.

Namely, as shown in FIG. 61, the paper on the platen is conveyed while being pressed by the carriage through the SUS plate. In step S704, the carriage shifts to the SP point for the subsequent printing operation. The SP point is the starting position of the printing operation. The operations of the steps S705 - S708 are for the printing of the second band in the same manner as that in the first band.

After the third band (including the third band), the controlling operation will be somewhat changed. In step S709, the third band is printed, and in step S710 the carriage shifts to the SP point. In step S711 the paper is conveyed.

Since the rear end of the paper enters into the pair of the paper discharging rollers at the second paper feeding, the paper feeding operation after and including the third paper feeding is carried out with the carriage stopped at the SP point.

Thereafter, a printing operation for 35 bands are performed until step S106.

In case of A4 size paper, the printing operation is carried out for 35 bands.

FIG. 62 shows an OHP printing mode.

The OHP printing control differs from the coated paper printing mode in the carriage operation for the first and the second bands. In step S801 the first band is printed while in step S802 the carriage is shifted to the SP point. In step S803 the paper is conveyed.

The amount for paper feeding is 8mm, being the printing width for one band. In step S804, the second band is printed.

Likewise, the printing operation is carried out for 33 bands. This is the printing operation for OHP paper of A4 size.

In case of OHP mode, the SUS plate is composed as shown in FIG. 59. Therefore, such a printing control operation as stopping the carriage at the S point as in the coated paper mode for feeding the paper being in printing is not carried out.

FIG. 63 shows a controlling flow diagram in RHS printing mode. In step S901, the carriage advances to a predetermined position. No printing is done. In step S902, the carriage moves to the SP point. In step S903, the paper is conveyed. The paper feeding amount is approximately 8 mm. In step S904, the printing operation is carried out for the first band. In step S905 the carriage shifts to the SP point. In step S906 the paper is conveyed. The operations of the steps S907 - S909 and S910 - S912 for the second and third bands respectively are the same as that of the steps S904 - S906.

The operations of the steps S913 - S923 are that repeated of the aforementioned operations. The carriage executes eight times of the scanning operation in total.

The eight times of the scanning operations can be breakdown as follows: one time of empty scan; continuous printing for three bands; one time of empty scan; and continuous printing for three bands, and thereafter the RHS mode terminates.

In case of the RHS printing mode, on entering the printing mode, the rear end of the paper enters between the discharging paper rollers.

Therefore, it is impossible that the carriage stops at the S point on conveying the paper in coated paper mode.

FIG. 64 is a block diagram of the controlling system of the present invention.

The control section 318 comprises a CPU 318a for executing the processes of the above-mentioned embodiments, a ROM 318b for storing fixed data such as programs corresponding to the process, and a RAM 318c for working.

Further, the carriage driving motor 319 comprises a paper feeding motor and a paper discharging roller, a sub-scan motor 320 for driving the pick-up roller, a paper feeding solenoid 321, a paper feeding sensor 310 and a paper discharging sensor.

In the tenth embodiment, the SUS plate may be used to press the paper also when two images are printed on a single paper and when a paper is transported between two printing area, in addition to the paper feeding operation before and in the printing operation.

Further, as shown in FIG. 61, the position where the carriage stops on the SUS plate is only one, S point. But if the paper size or position to be supplied is changed, the carriage stopping position on the SUS plate can be changed in accordance therewith (alternatively the force to press the SUS plate may be changed).

For example, the present invention can be applied, in addition to A4 size, also to A5 size and A6 size for

recording operation.

The force and position of the pressing member, therefore, can be changed in accordance with the paper size or position on the platen.

FIG. 65A is a diagram for the explanation of the above operation. In this cross-sectional view, it is shown that the SUS plate (pressing member) 317 is pressed by the wheels of the carriage 312, and using this pressing force the SUS plate holds the recording paper.

FIG. 65B shows a case of feeding a paper of A6 size.

Since the whole paper is deviated toward the left-hand side, it is preferable to hold the paper at the point S2 at the left side of the point S. Thus, the position to hold the paper by the carriage can be effectively changed in accordance with the paper size.

As explained above, the following advantages can be obtained:

(1) The paper is prevented from floating on the platen by holding the pressing member by the carriage on conveying the paper, so as to provide a desirable image.

(2) In case of manual paper feeding, undesirable jamming effect can be avoided by raising or lowering the pressing member at the paper feeding side by the solenoid.

Claims

1. An image recording apparatus for controlling an image recording operation on the basis of a detected width of a recording medium by a paper width detecting means after the recording medium is fed to a predetermined position on a platen, wherein whether the recording medium is desirably conveyed or not is determined on the basis of a signal obtained by said paper width detecting means.
2. An image recording apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said paper width detecting means detects the presence or absence of the recording medium within a recordable area of a recording head.
3. An image recording apparatus according to claims 1 or 2, wherein the presence or absence of the recording medium is detected on the basis on a signal obtained by moving said paper width detecting means in the direction perpendicular to the conveying direction of the recording medium.
4. An image recording apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 3, wherein said paper width detecting means includes a first and a second paper width sensor for detecting the presence or the absence of the recording medium at different positions with respect to the conveying direction of the recording medium, and determines the conveyed state of the recording medium on the basis of the output signals from said first and second paper width sensors.
5. An image recording apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 4, wherein the image is recorded by ejecting ink drops on the recording medium having been conveyed on the platen.
6. An image recording apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the ink drops are ejected by changing the state of the ink by thermal energy.
7. An image recording apparatus for detecting a width of a recording medium by an paper width detecting means after the recording medium is conveyed to a predetermined position on a platen,
wherein a positional deviated amount of the recording medium having been conveyed on the platen is detected on the basis of signals obtained by said paper width detecting means.
8. An image recording apparatus according to claim 7, wherein when the positional deviated amount is less than a predetermined amount, the recording position on the recording medium is controlled on the basis of the positional deviated amount for recording the image on a proper position of the recording medium.
9. An image recording apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the recording operation on the recording medium is prohibited when the positional deviated amount exceeds the predetermined amount.
10. An image recording apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said paper width detecting means includes a first and a second paper width sensors for detecting the presence or absence of the recording medium at different positions with respect to the conveying direction of the recording medium, and the recording operation is controlled by determining the conveyed state of the recording medium in accordance with

positional deviated amount on the basis of an output signal from the first and second paper width sensors.

11. An image recording apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the recording operation on the recording medium is prohibited when the positional deviated amount on the basis of said first and second paper width sensors are mutually different.
12. An image recording apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the recording position on the recording medium is controlled on the basis of the positional deviated amount to record the image at a proper position of the recording medium, when the positional deviated amount on the basis of the output signals from the first and the second paper width sensors are the same.
13. An image recording apparatus according to any of claims 7 - 12, wherein the image is recorded by ejecting ink drops on the recording medium having been conveyed on the platen.
14. An image recording apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the ink drops are ejected by causing a state change in the ink by using thermal energy.
15. An image recording apparatus comprising:
 - a conveying means for conveying a sheet member;
 - a recording means for recording an image on a sheet member conveyed by said conveying means;
 - a first detecting means for detecting the width of the sheet member;
 - a second detecting means for detecting the rear end of the sheet member conveyed by said conveying means at the upstream side of said recording means;
 - a control means for controlling at least either one of conveying amount by said conveying means and recording area of said recording means on the basis of information in accordance with the width of the sheet member detected by said first detecting means and a conveyed amount until the rear end of the sheet member is detected by said second detecting means.
16. An image recording apparatus according to claim 15,
 - wherein said conveying means includes a first conveying section for conveying the sheet member at the upstream side of said recording medium and a second conveying section for conveying the sheet member at the downstream side of said recording medium, and the conveying amount of said second conveying section is larger than that of said first conveying section.
17. An image recording apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said conveying means conveys the sheet member in steps by a predetermined amount each time, and the information in accordance with the conveying amount is the times of the steps of conveying.
18. An image recording apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said recording means is in the form of ink jet recording head for recording by ejecting ink on the sheet member.
19. An image recording apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said ink jet recording head ejects the ink drops by changing the state of the ink using thermal energy.
20. An image recording apparatus comprising a conveying means for conveying a sheet member and a recording means for recording an image of a constant width on the sheet member conveyed by said conveying means,
 - wherein said recording means has recording elements more than those corresponding to the constant width, so as to make the recording elements to be used for the recording variable.
21. An image recording apparatus according to claim 20, wherein said apparatus further comprising a selecting means for selecting the recording elements to be used for the recording operation from the total recording elements.
22. An image recording apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said conveying means conveys the sheet member in steps at every recording of the constant width, and said selecting means selects the recording elements to be used for the recording on the basis of the conveyed state of the sheet member.
23. An image recording apparatus according to claim 22,
 - wherein said conveying means includes a first conveying section located at the upstream side of

said recording means and a second conveying section located at the downstream side of said recording means for conveying the sheet member with a conveying amount larger than that of the first conveying section, and said selecting means changes the recording elements to be used for recording before and after the rear end of the sheet member passes through the first conveying section.

5

24. An image recording apparatus according to claim 22,

wherein said conveying means includes a first conveying section located at the upstream side of said recording means and a second conveying section located at the downstream side of said recording means for conveying a sheet member with a conveying amount less than that of said first conveying section, and said selecting means changes the recording elements to be used for recording before and after the rear end for the sheet member passes through the second conveying section.

10

25. An image recording apparatus according to claim 20, wherein said recording element ejects the ink drops by changing the state of the ink.

15

26. An image recording apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said recording element ejects ink drops by changing the state of the ink using thermal energy.

27. An image recording apparatus comprising:

a conveying means for conveying a recording paper along a platen in the conveying direction to bring it to a predetermined position of the platen;

20

a paper pressing means for closely contacting the paper with the platen without floating therefrom; and

a carriage means movable in the direction perpendicular to the conveying direction for mounting a recording head to be opposed to the platen with a predetermined space therebetween.

25

28. An image recording apparatus for recording on a medium located at a predetermined recording position in a predetermined recording method, said apparatus comprising:

a light emitting means for generating light and illuminating a predetermined detecting position;

a detecting means for detecting the received light intensity disposed to receive the light generated in said light emitting means and reflected in random at the detecting position without receiving the regularly reflected light;

30

a recognizing means for recognizing the presence or absence and the kind of the recording medium at the detecting position from the light intensity detected by said detecting means.

29. An image recording apparatus according to claim 28,

35

wherein said apparatus further comprising a reflecting means for receiving the light emitted by said light emitting means and disposed so that the reflected light of the emitted light can be detected by said detecting means; and

said recognizing means compares the intensity of the reflected light from the reflecting means and the intensity of the reflected light at the detecting position to determine the presence or the absence and the kind of the recording medium at the detecting position.

40

30. An image recording apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said reflecting means is disposed such that the light emitting-receiving relationship between said light emitting means and said reflecting means and said detecting means substantially becomes a regular reflection.

45

31. An image recording apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the width and the presence or absence of the recording medium is recognized by shifting the detecting position along the recording position while keeping the positional relationship between said light emitting means and said detecting means.

50

32. An image recording apparatus according to claim 28, wherein said recording medium includes recording paper for ink jet printer and OHP (Over Head Projector) sheet and thick paper.

33. An image recording apparatus according to claim 28, wherein said recording method is an ink jet method for recording by ejecting ink.

55

34. An image recording apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said ink jet method is a bubble jet method in which a head ejects ink by growing bubbles to perform the recording.

FIG. 1

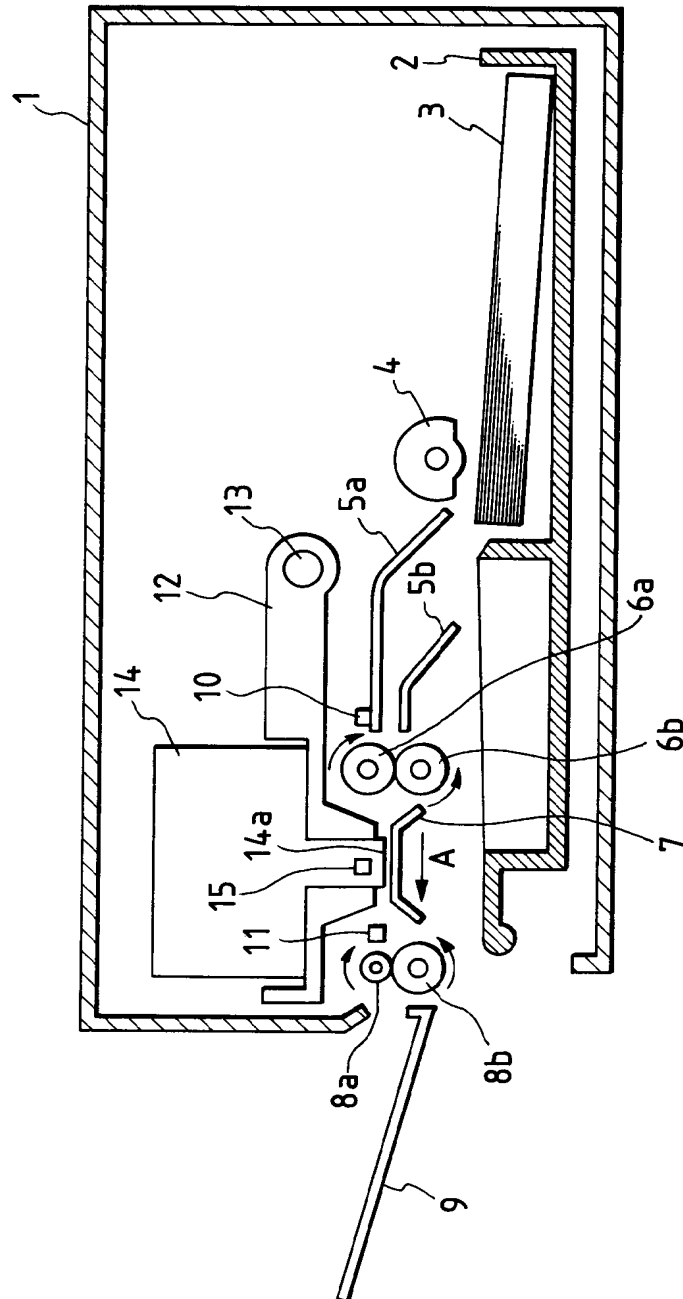


FIG. 2

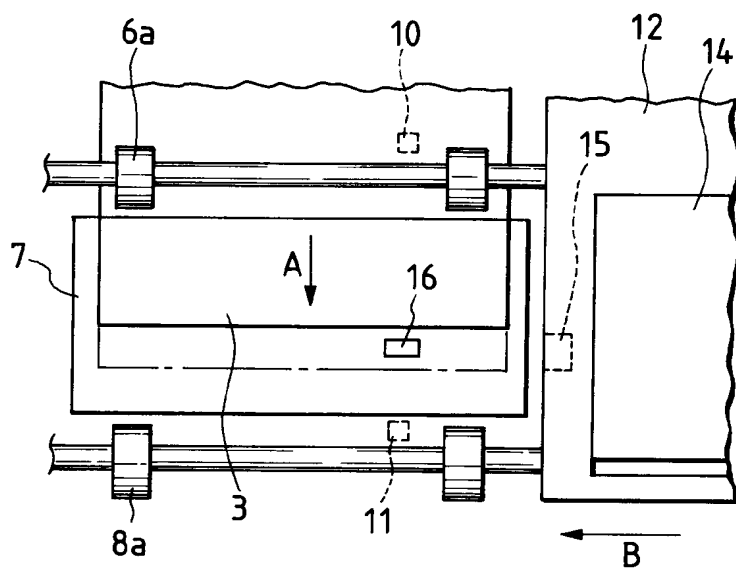


FIG. 3

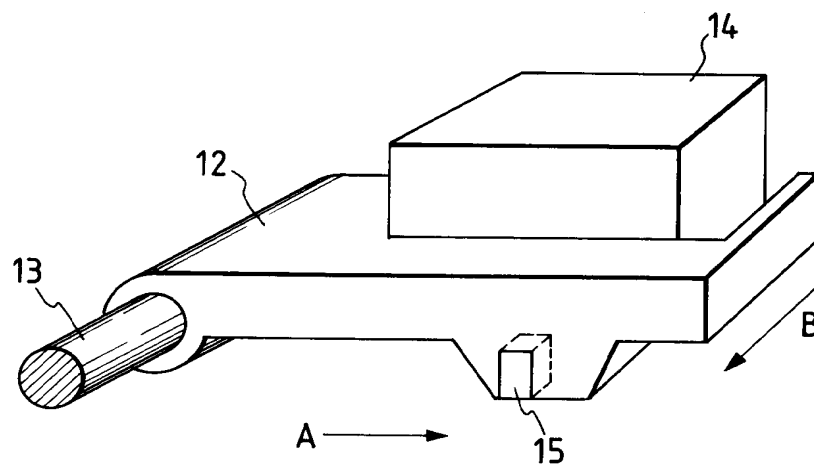


FIG. 4A

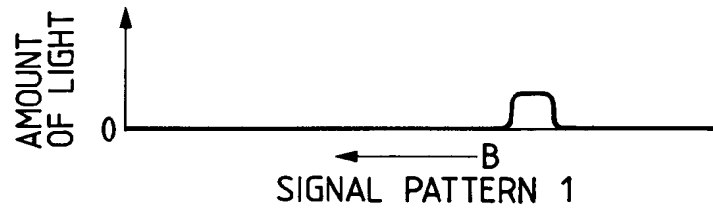


FIG. 4B

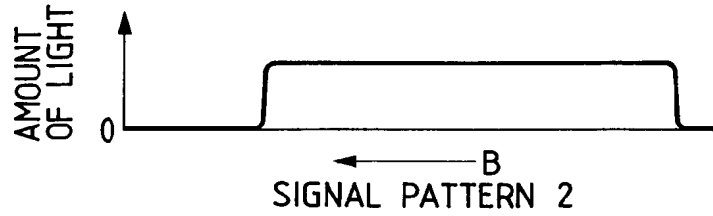


FIG. 4C

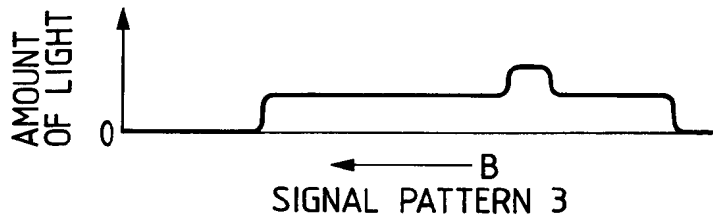


FIG. 4D

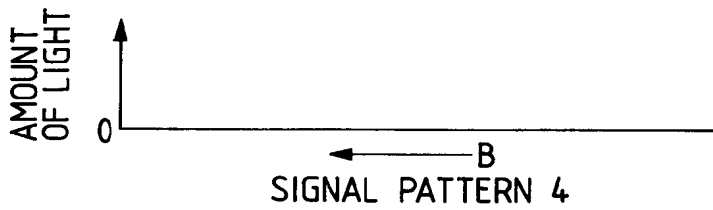


FIG. 5A

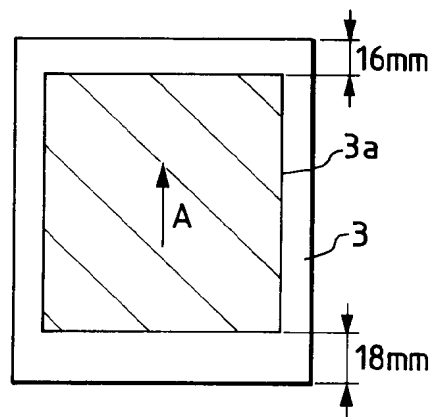


FIG. 5B

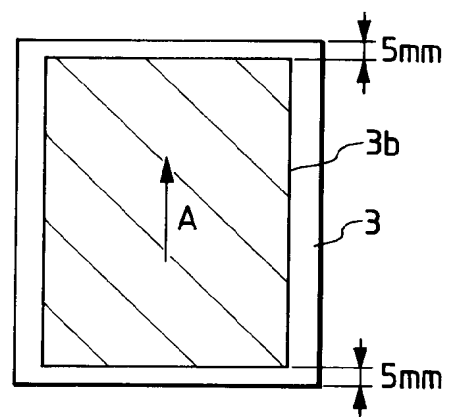


FIG. 6

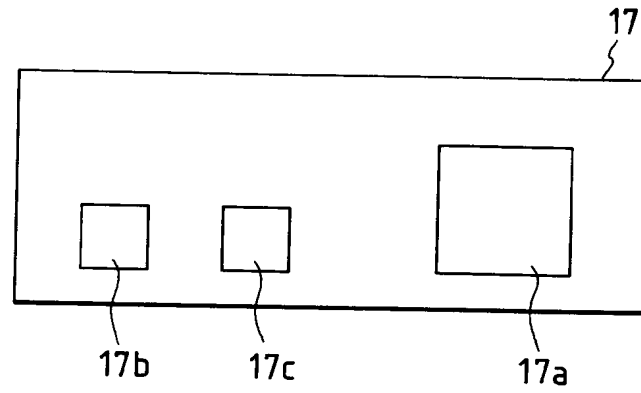


FIG. 7

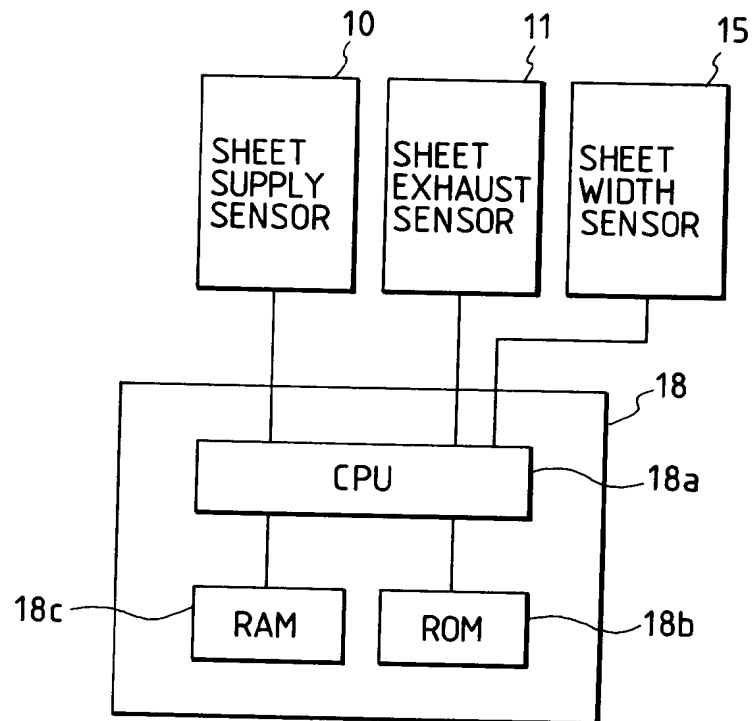


FIG. 8

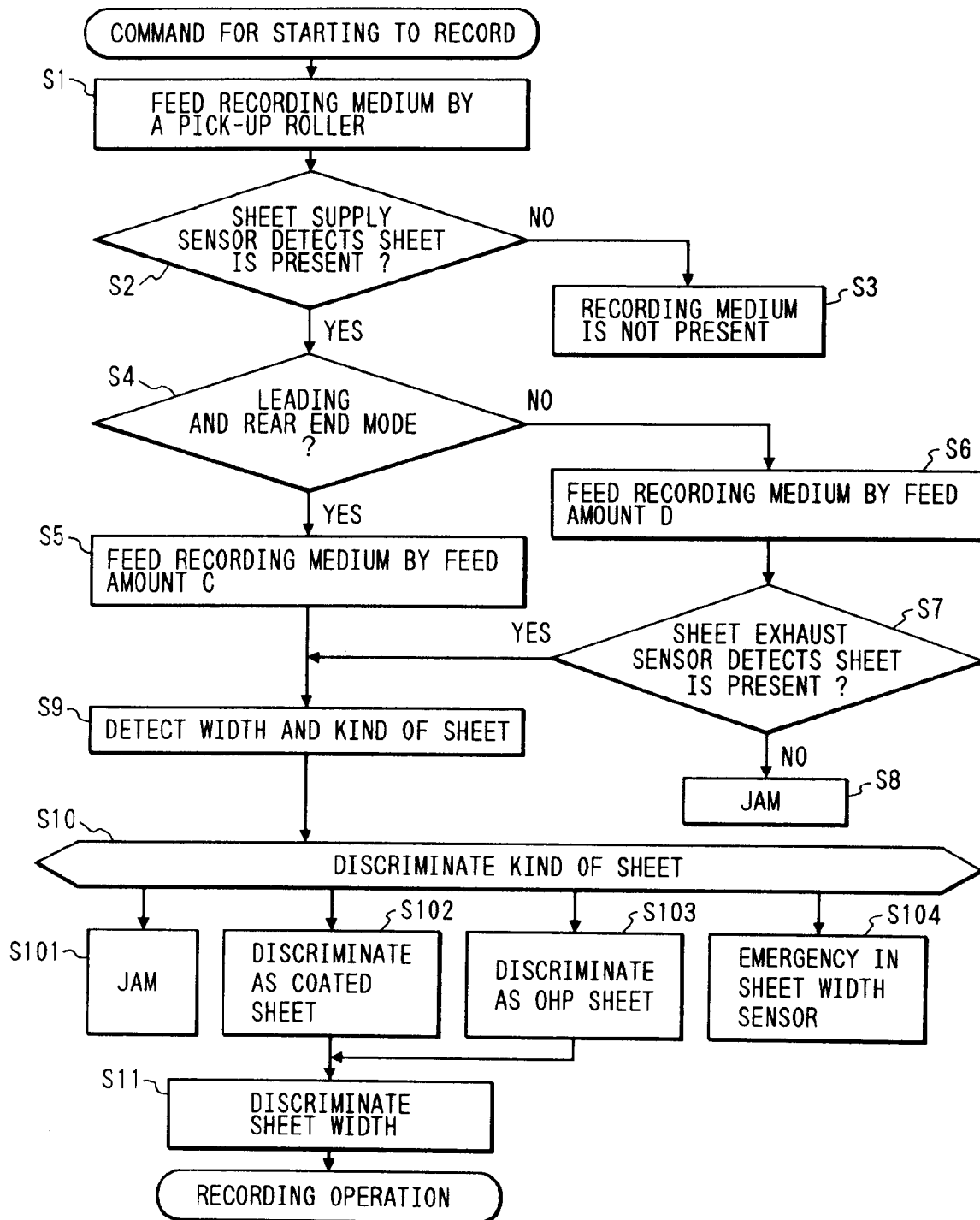


FIG. 9

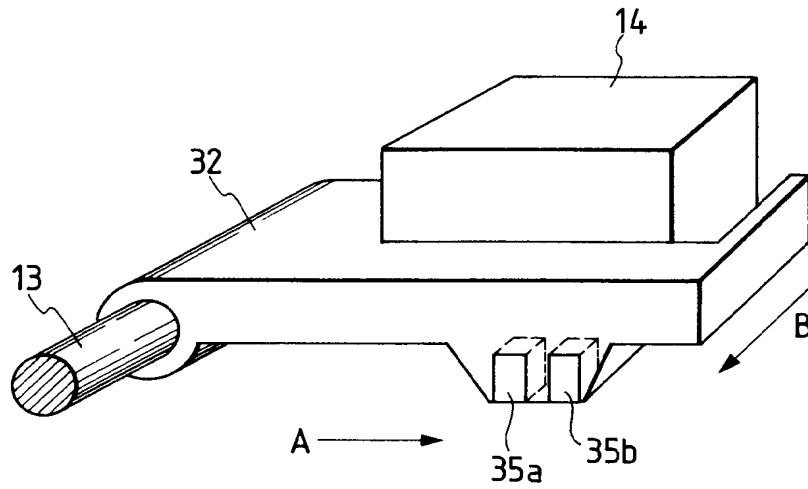


FIG. 10

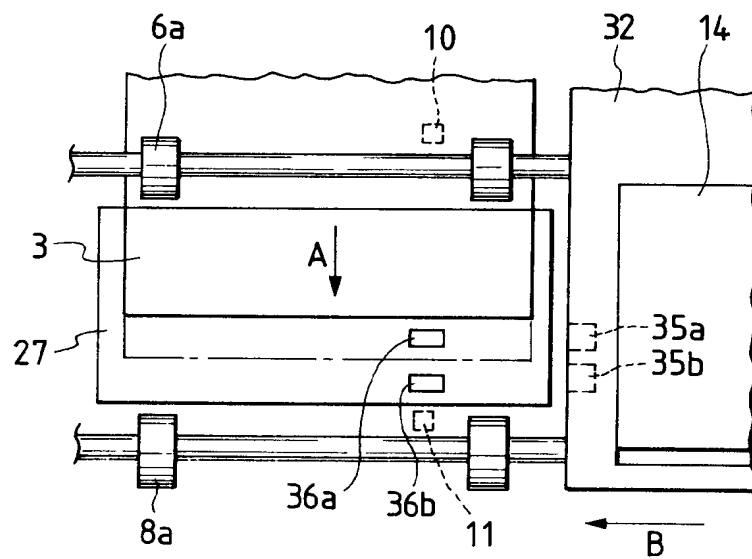


FIG. 11

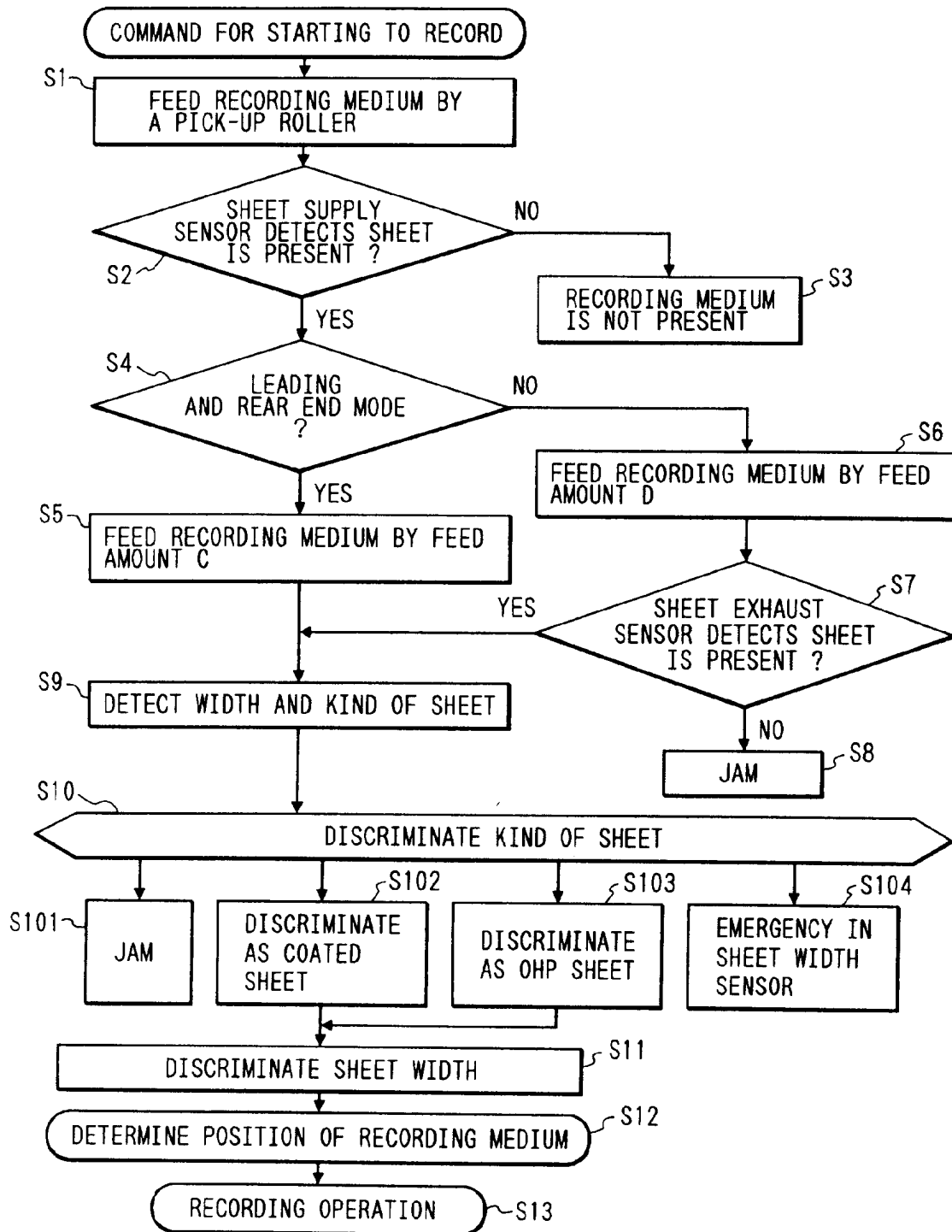


FIG. 12

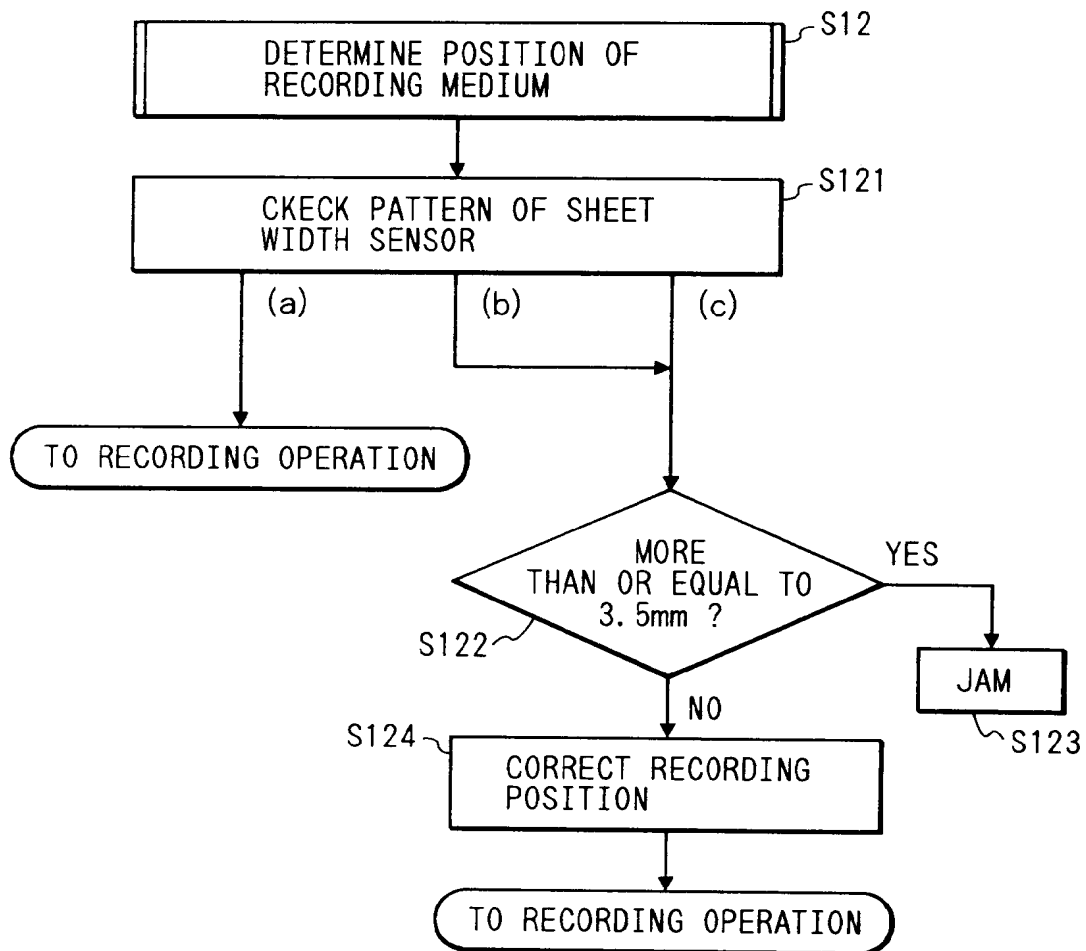


FIG. 13A

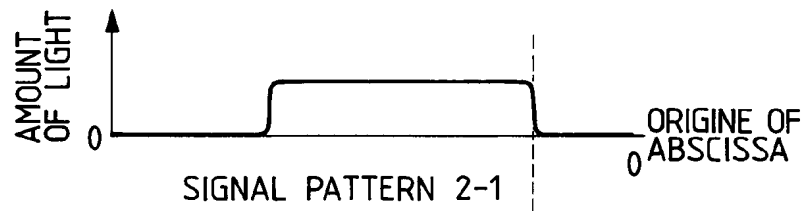


FIG. 13B

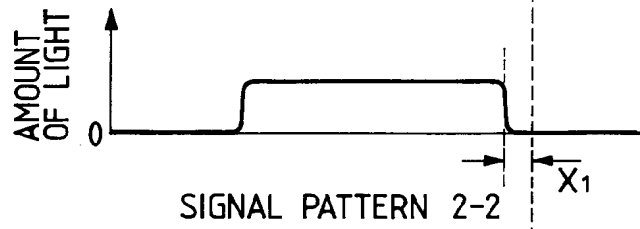


FIG. 13C

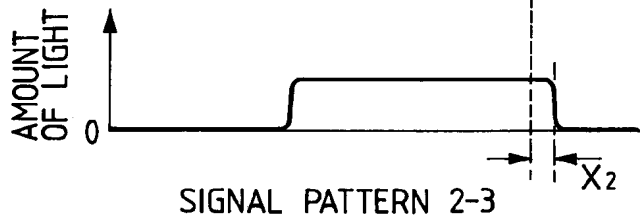


FIG. 15

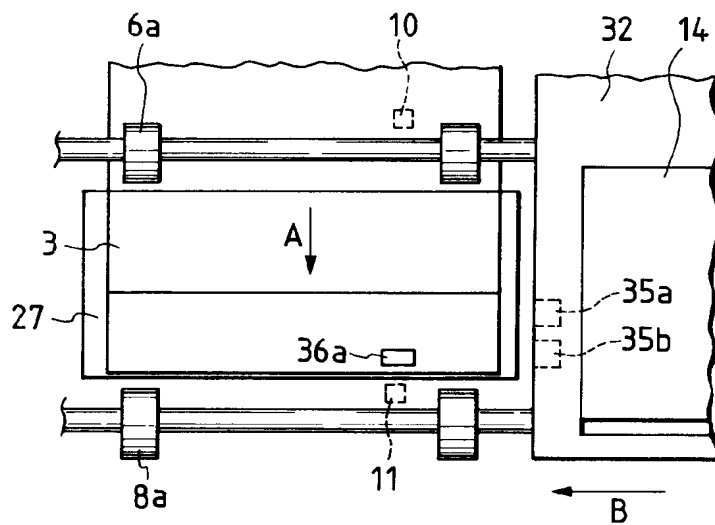


FIG. 14A

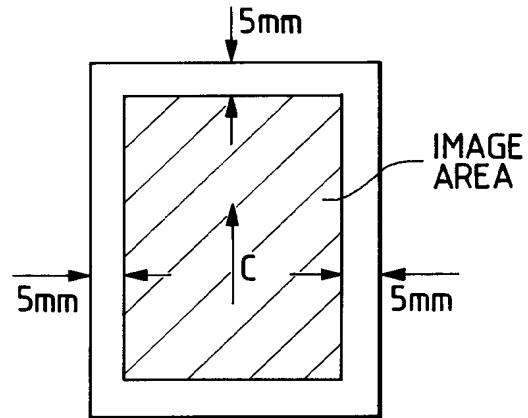


FIG. 14B

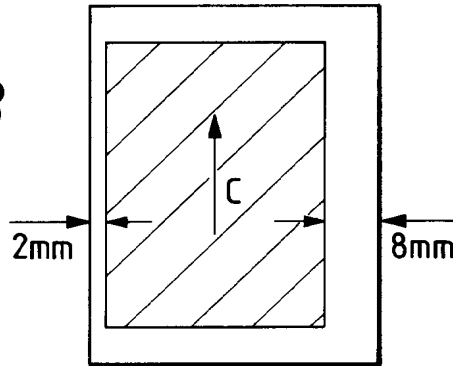


FIG. 14C

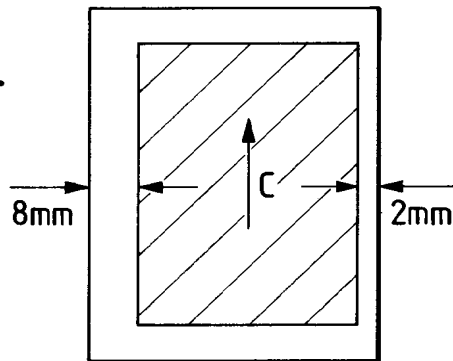


FIG. 16

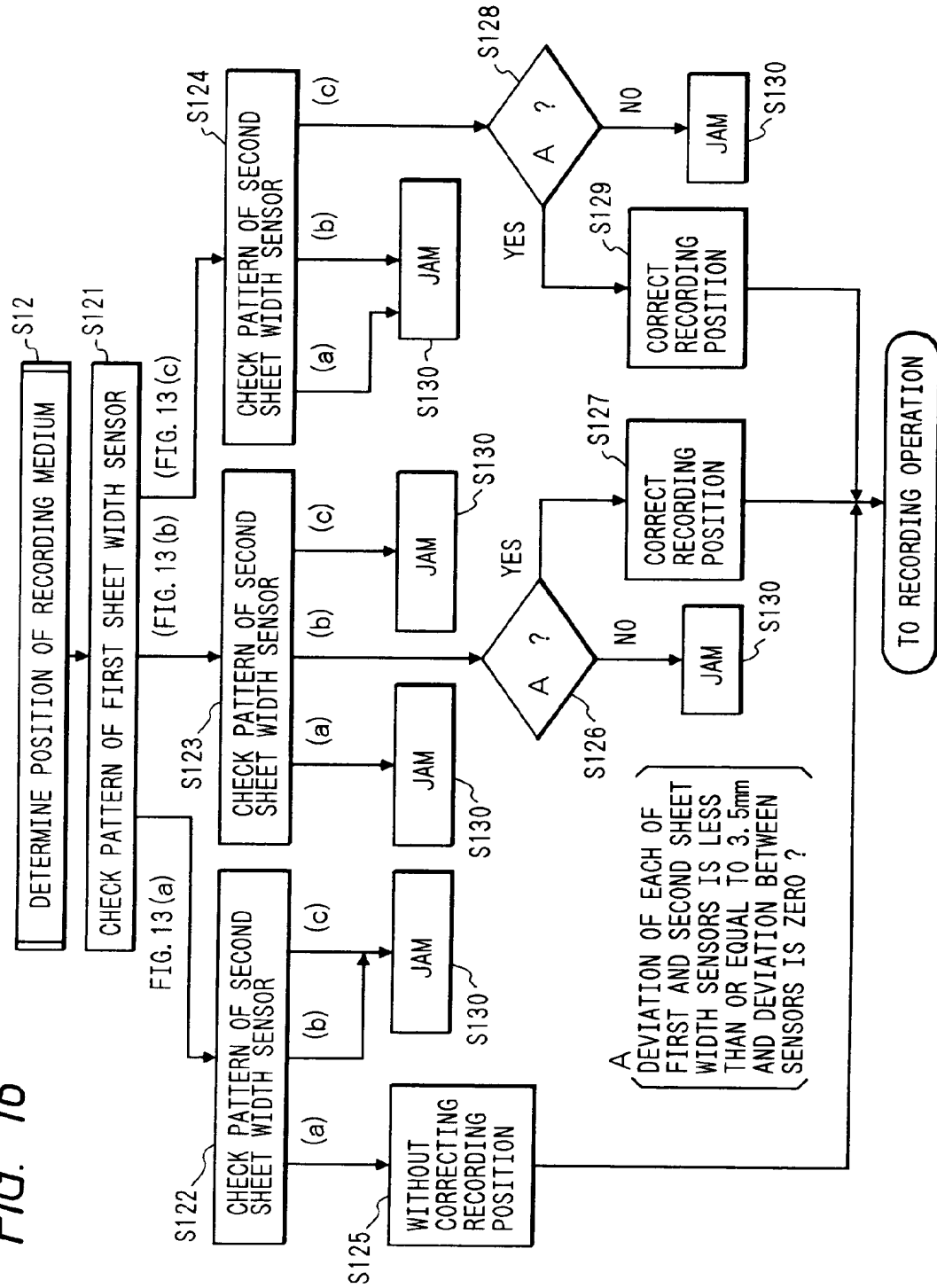


FIG. 17A

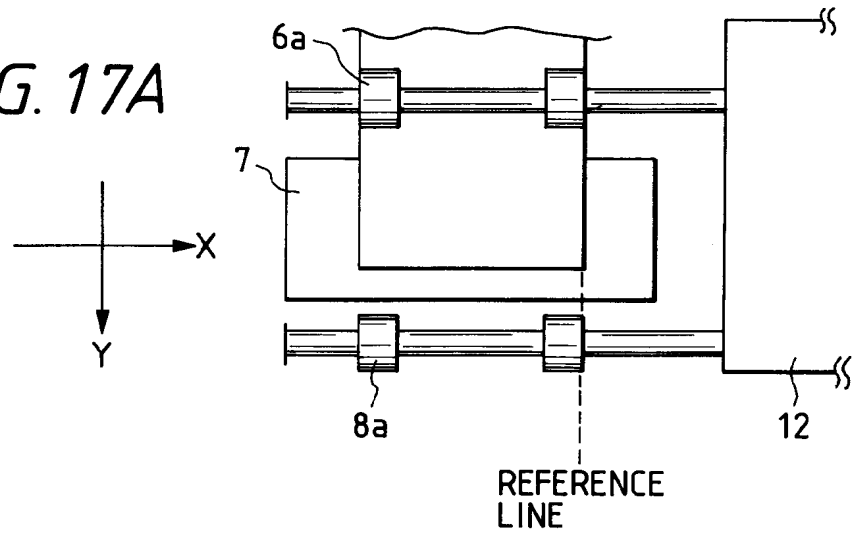


FIG. 17B

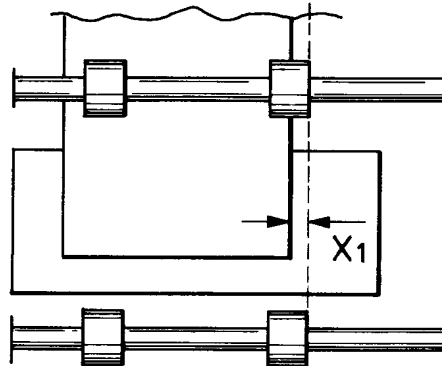


FIG. 17C

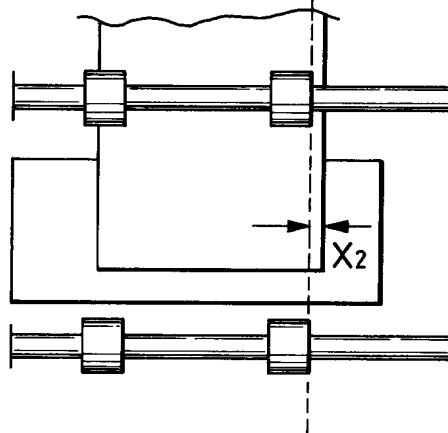


FIG. 18A

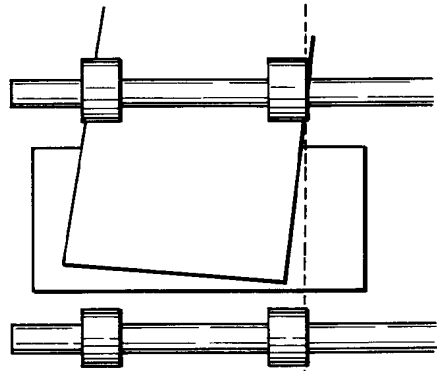


FIG. 18B

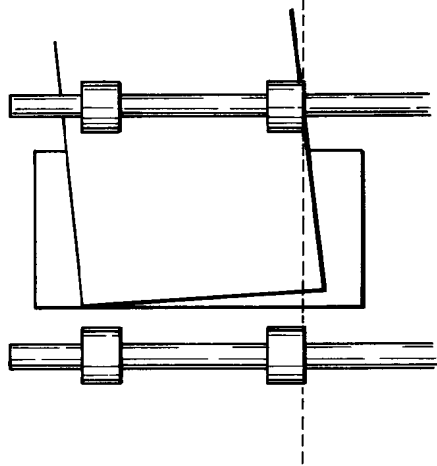


FIG. 19

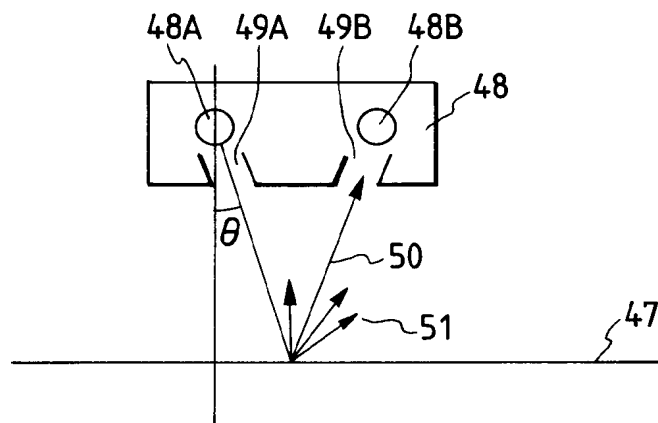


FIG. 20

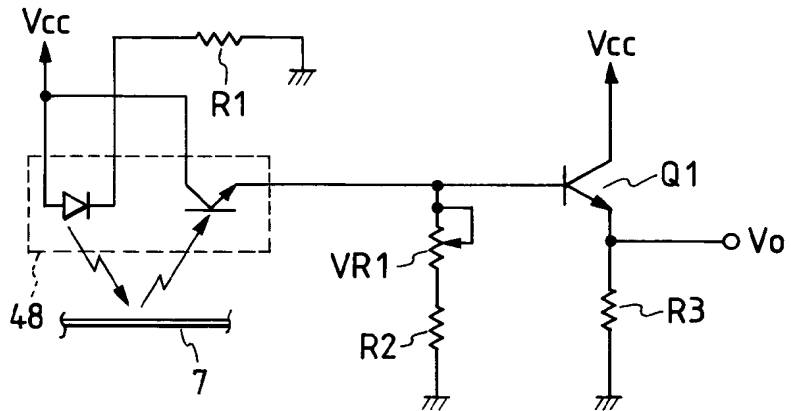


FIG. 21

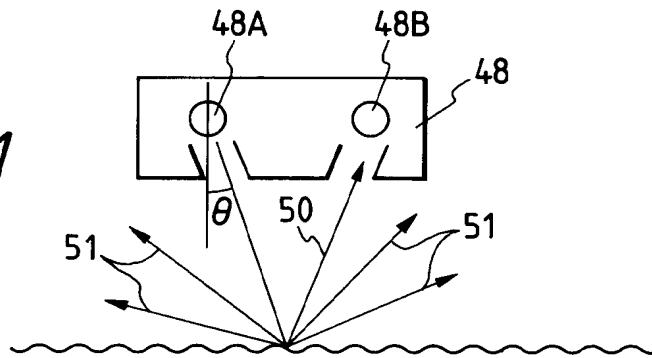


FIG. 22

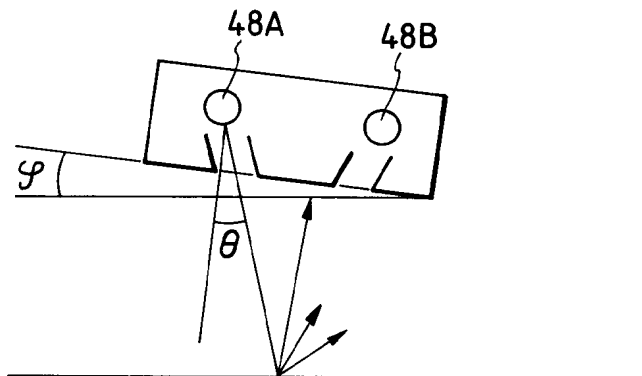


FIG. 23

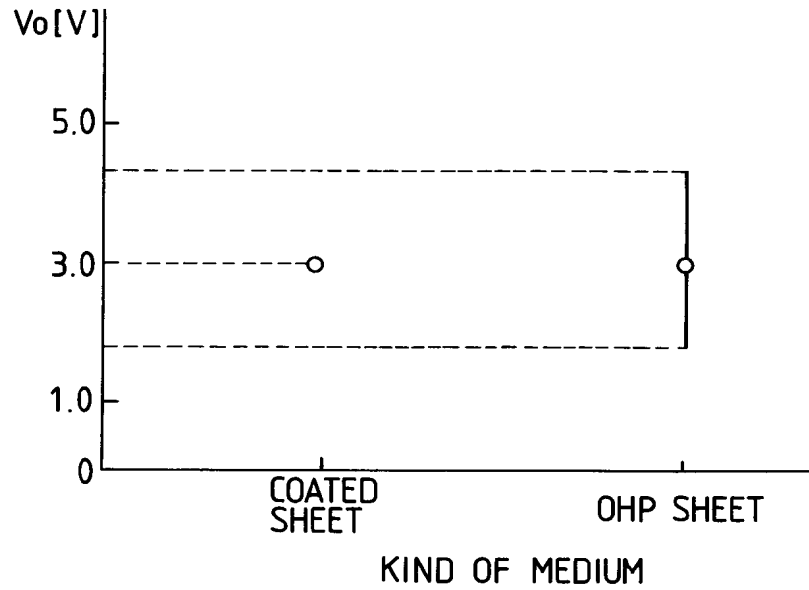


FIG. 24

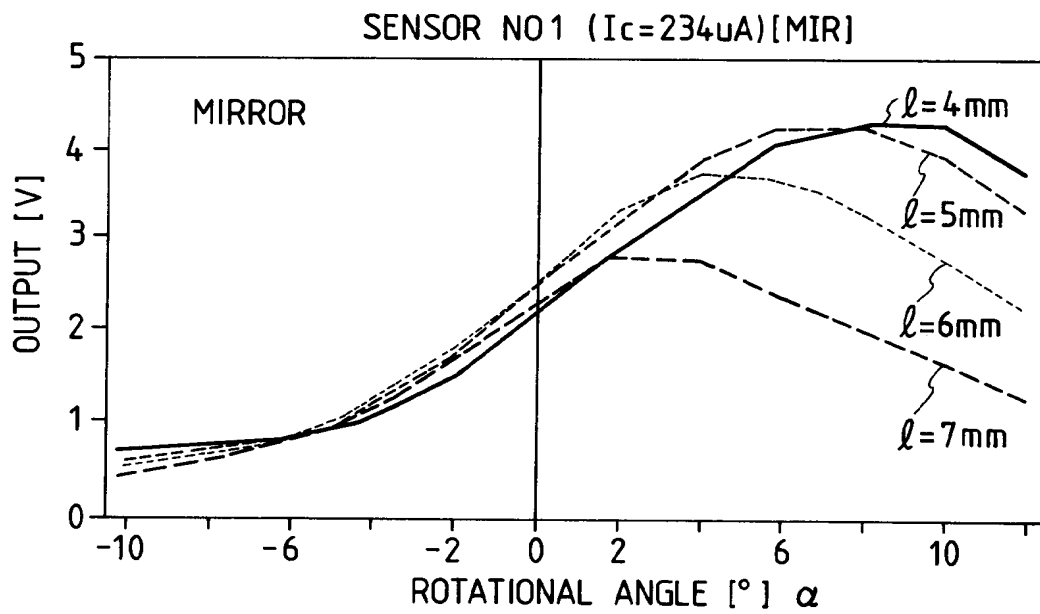


FIG. 25

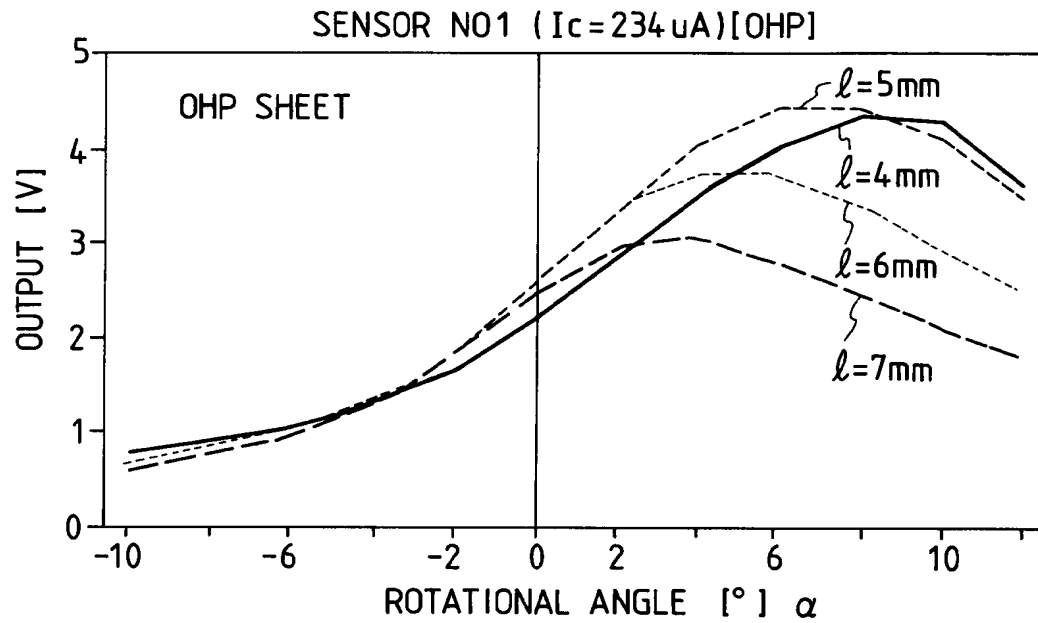


FIG. 26

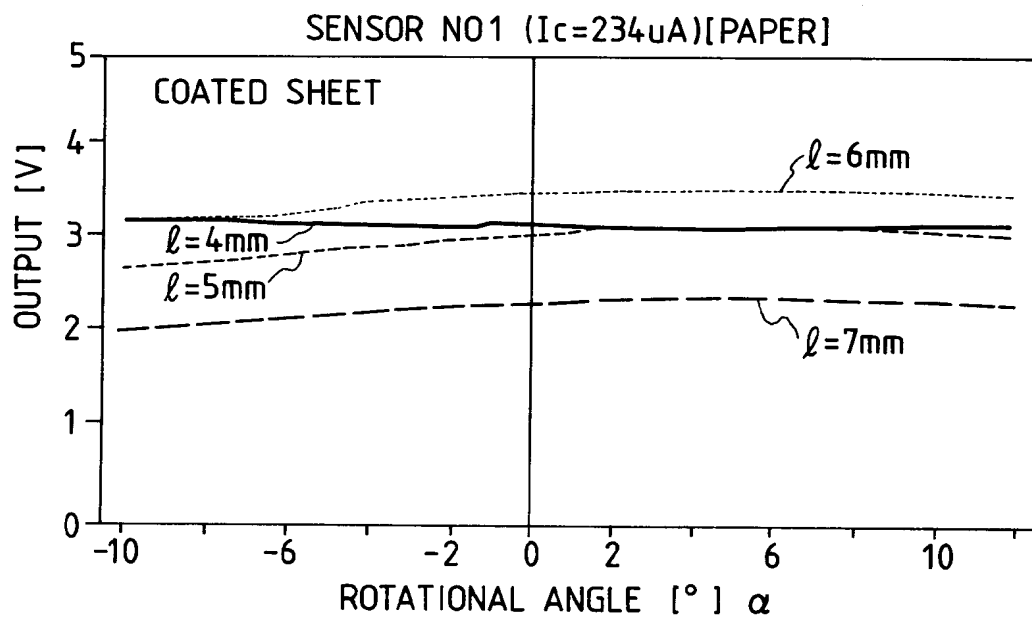


FIG. 27

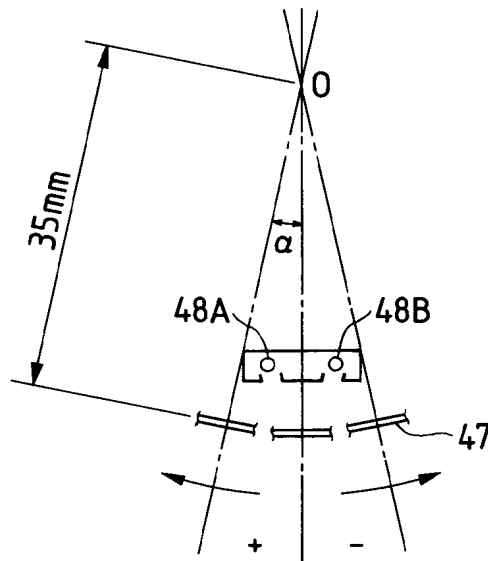


FIG. 28

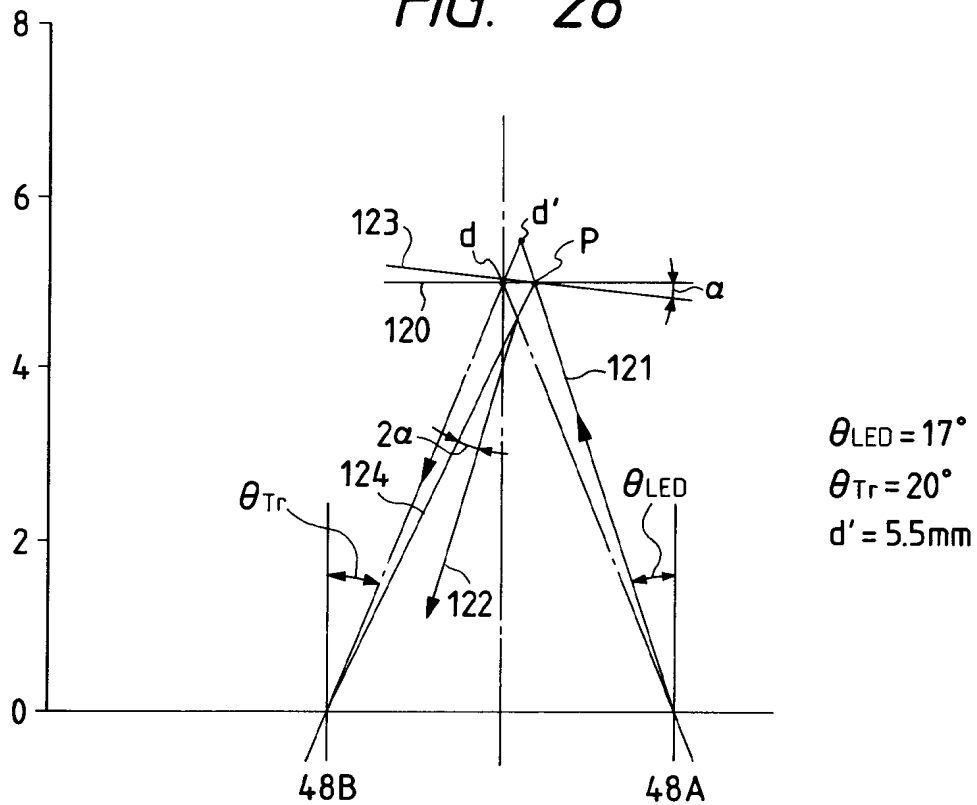


FIG. 29

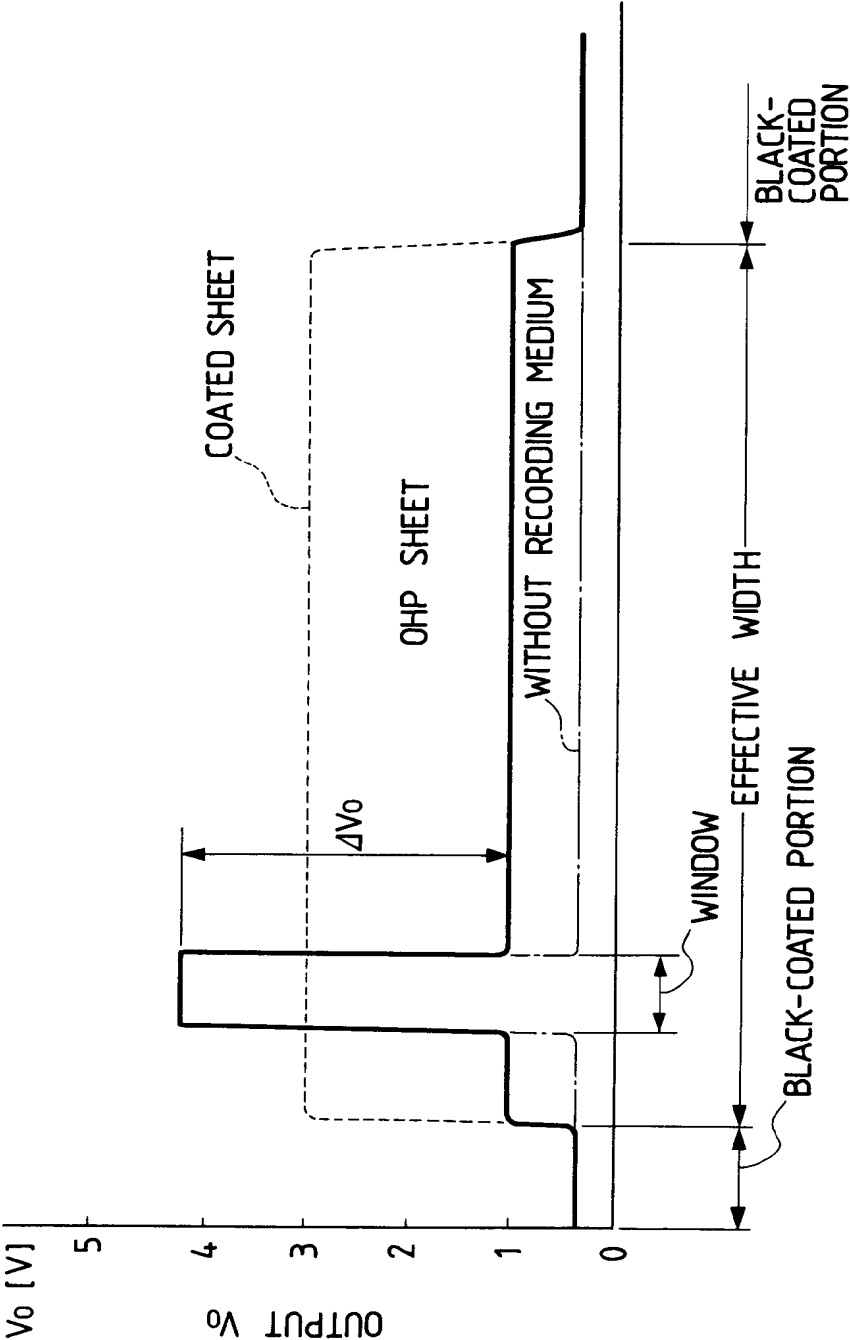


FIG. 30

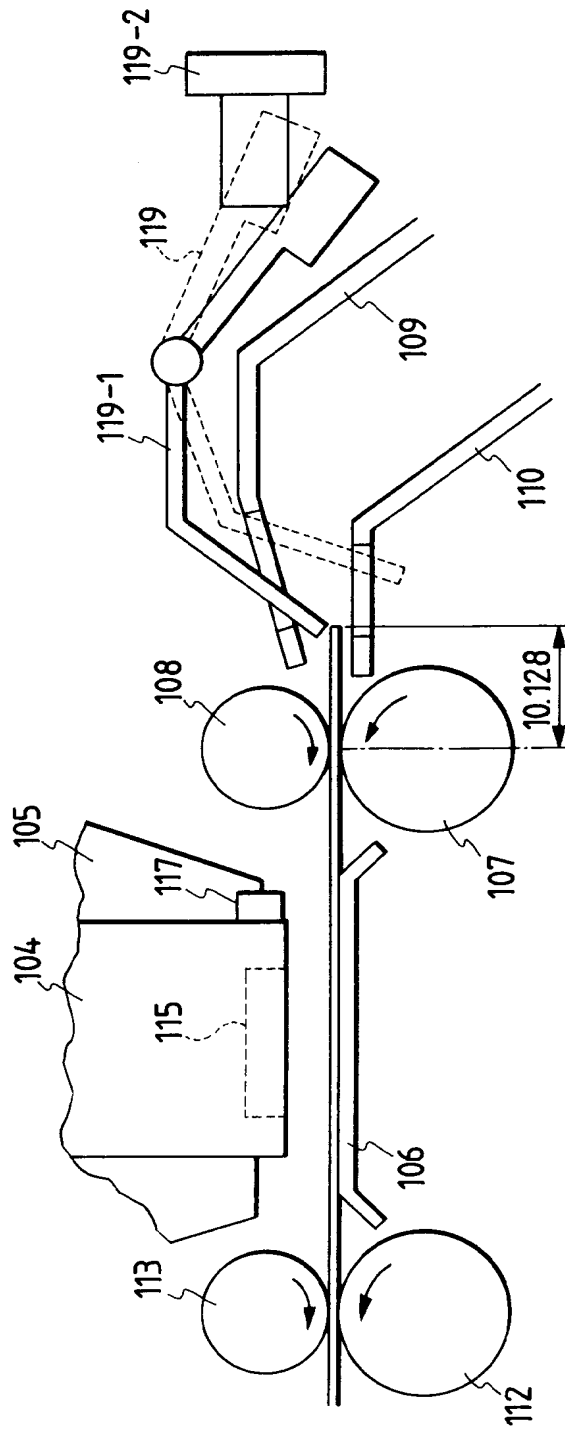


FIG. 31

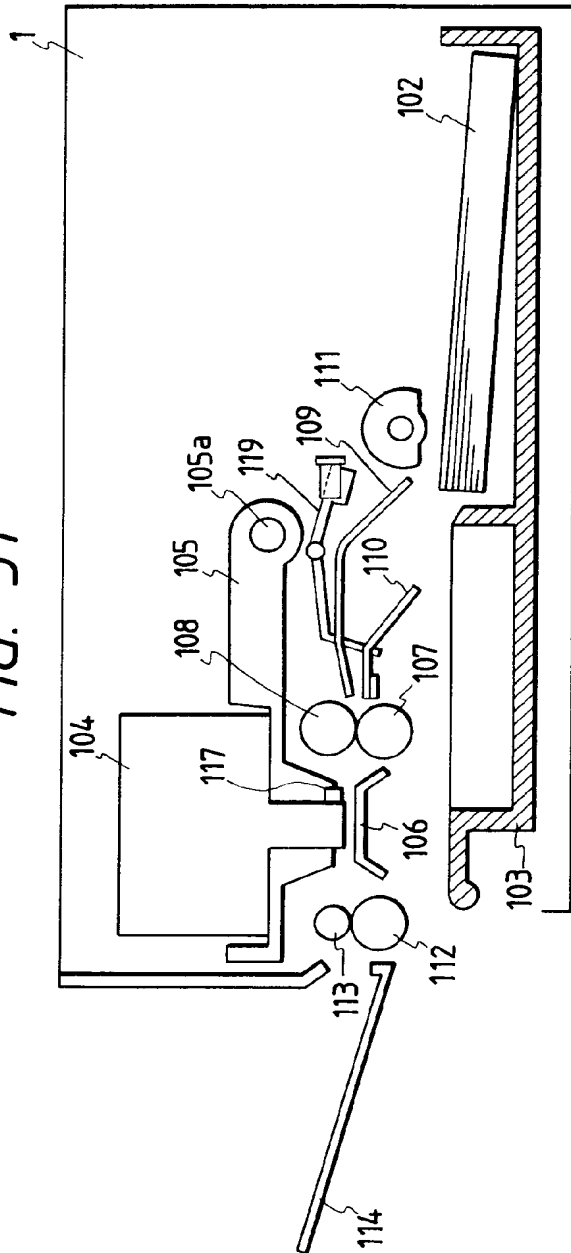


FIG. 32

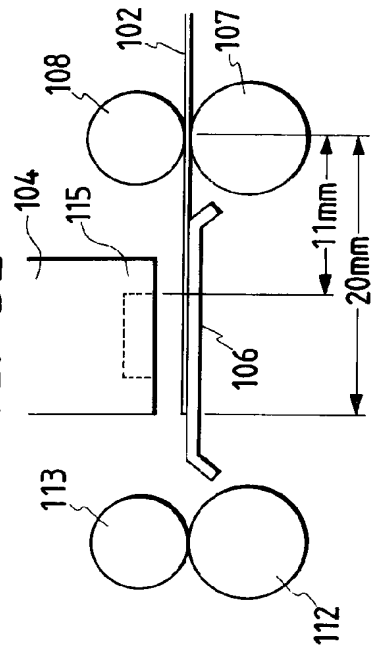


FIG. 33

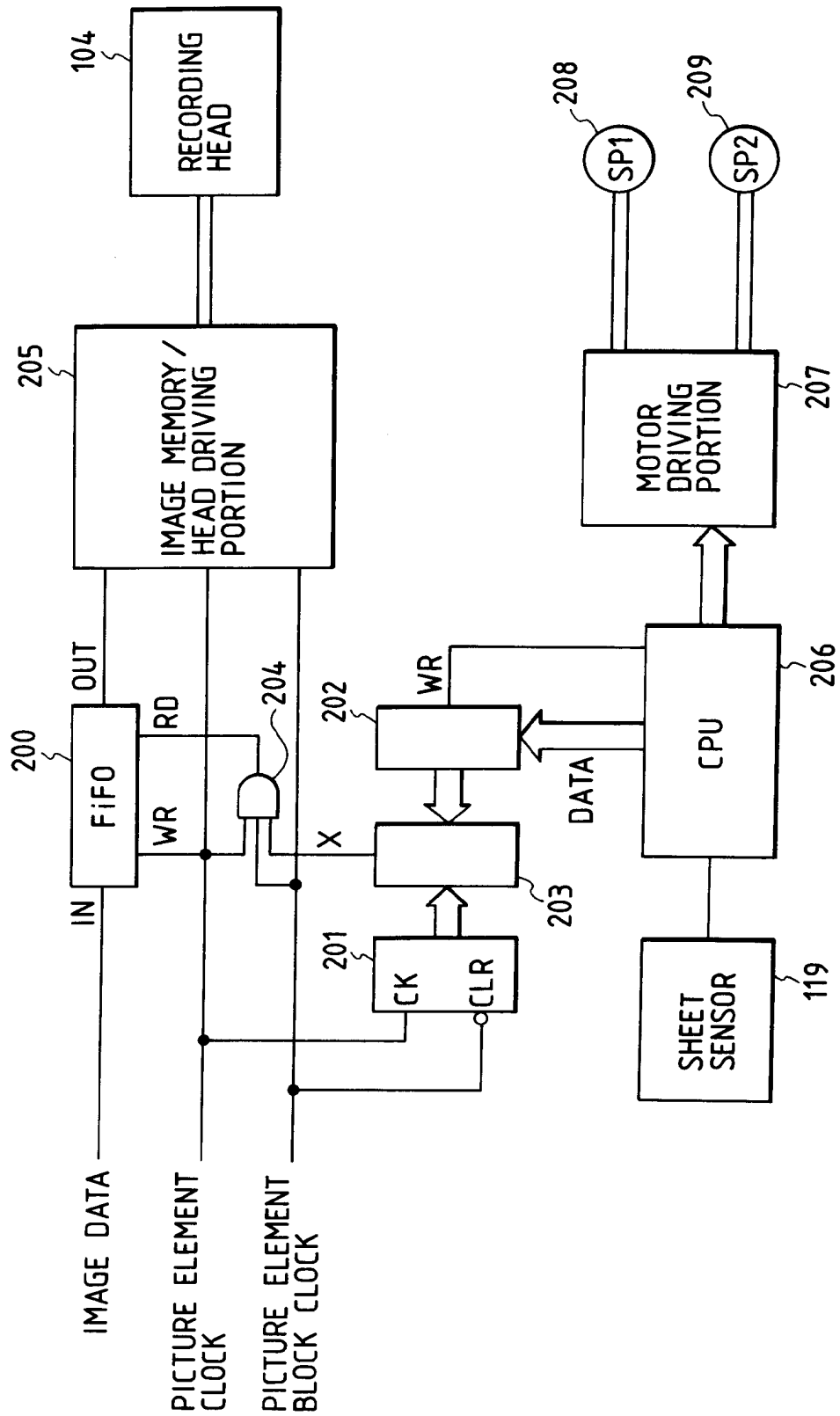


FIG. 34

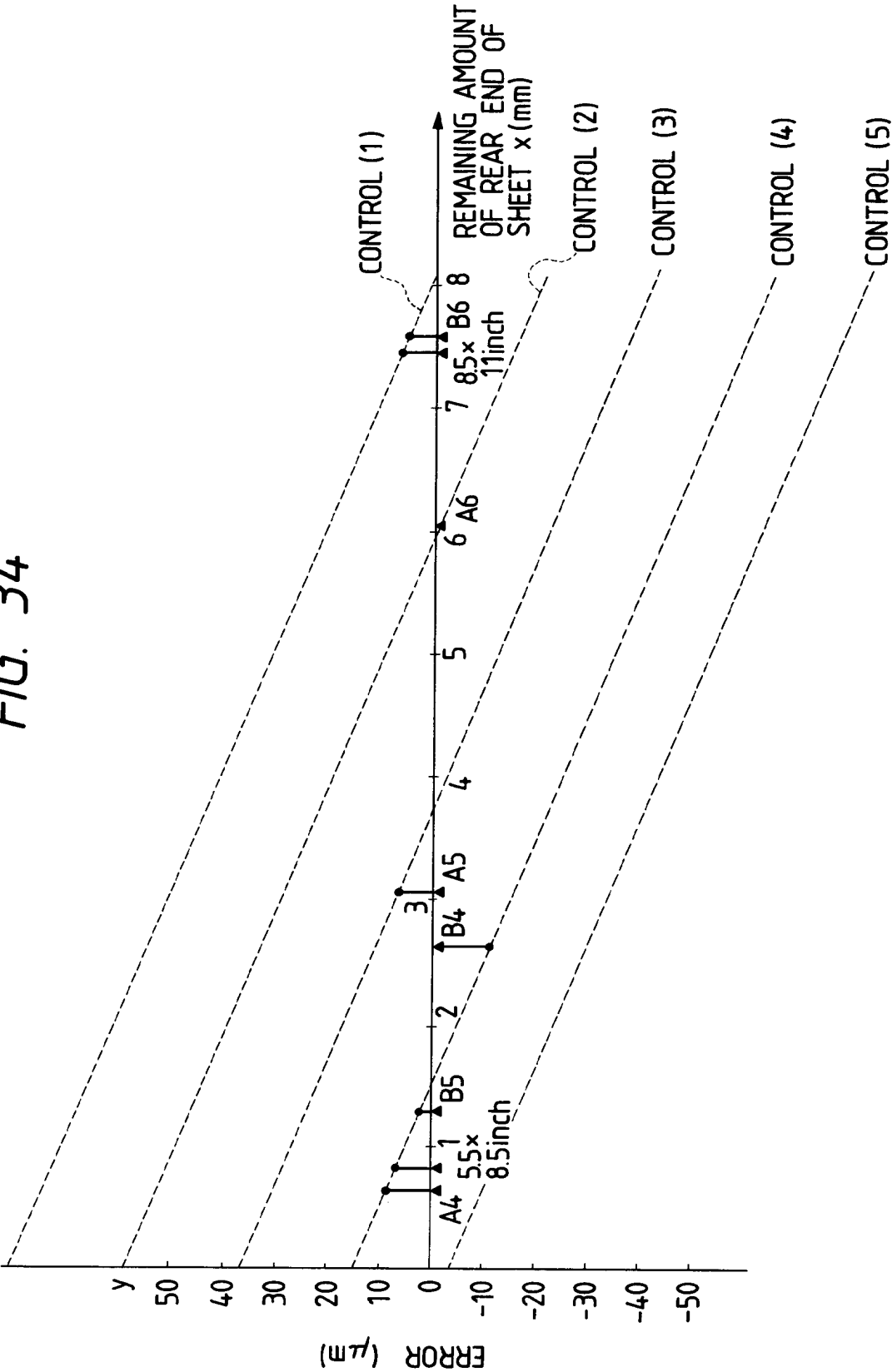


FIG. 35

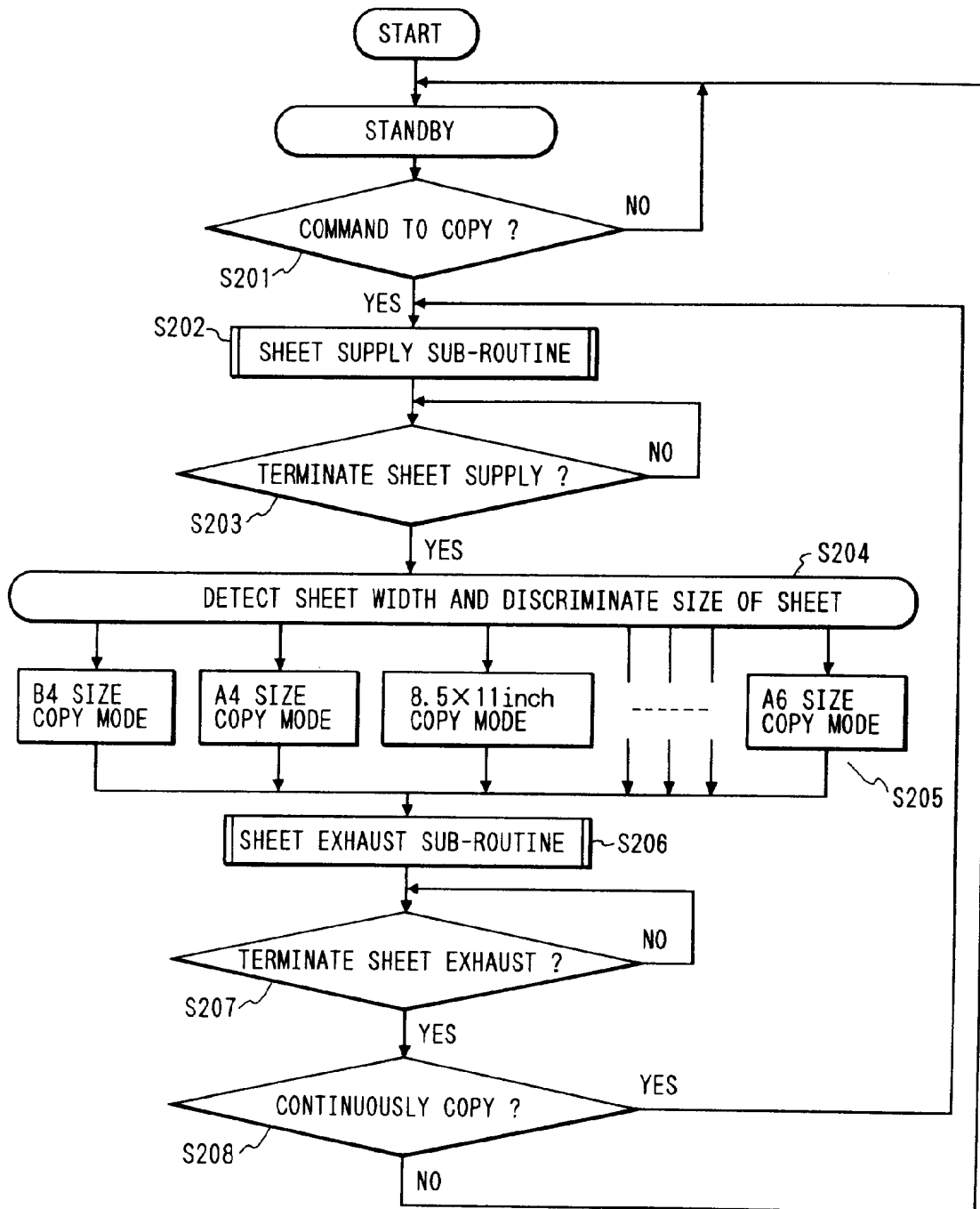


FIG. 36

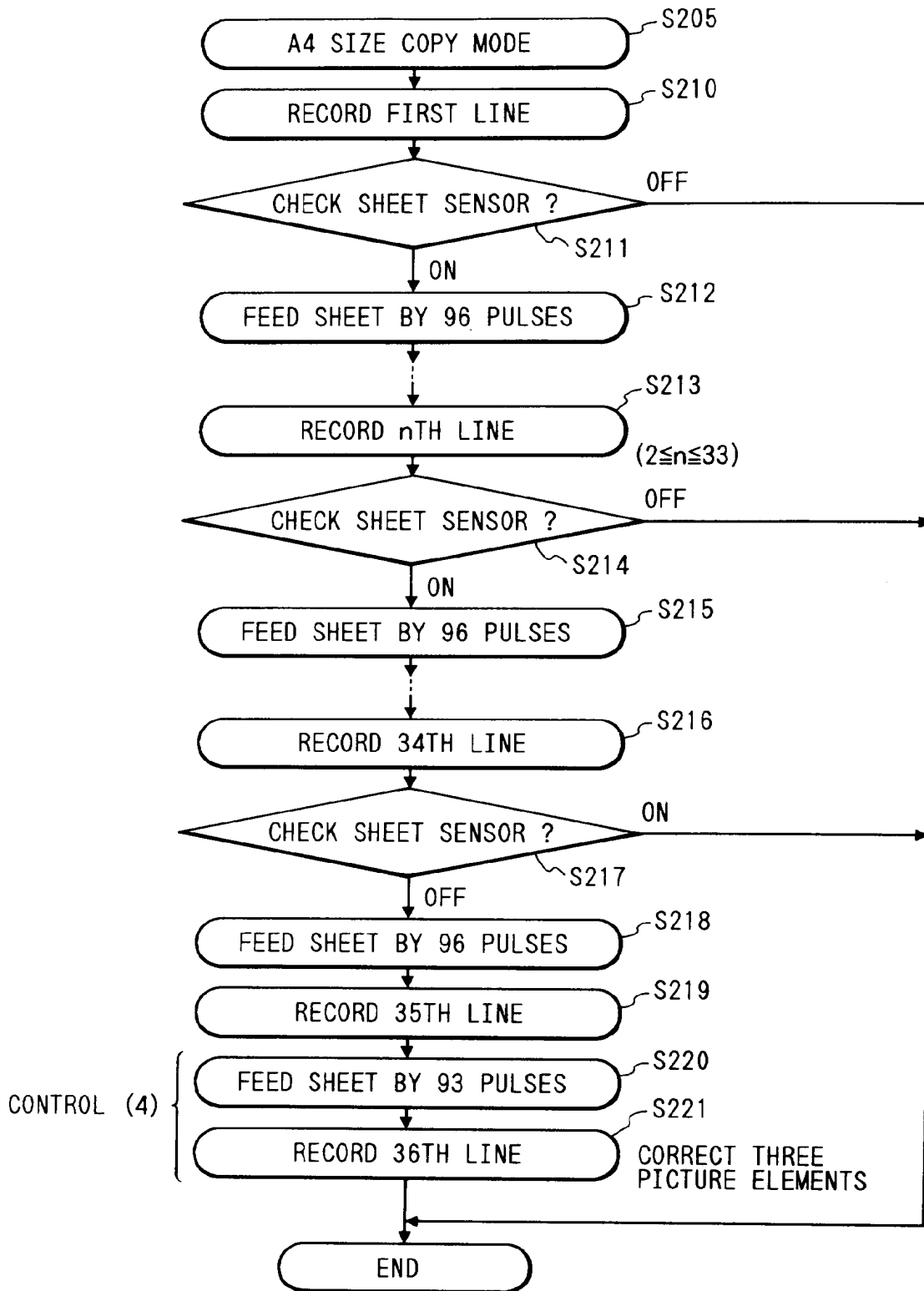


FIG. 37

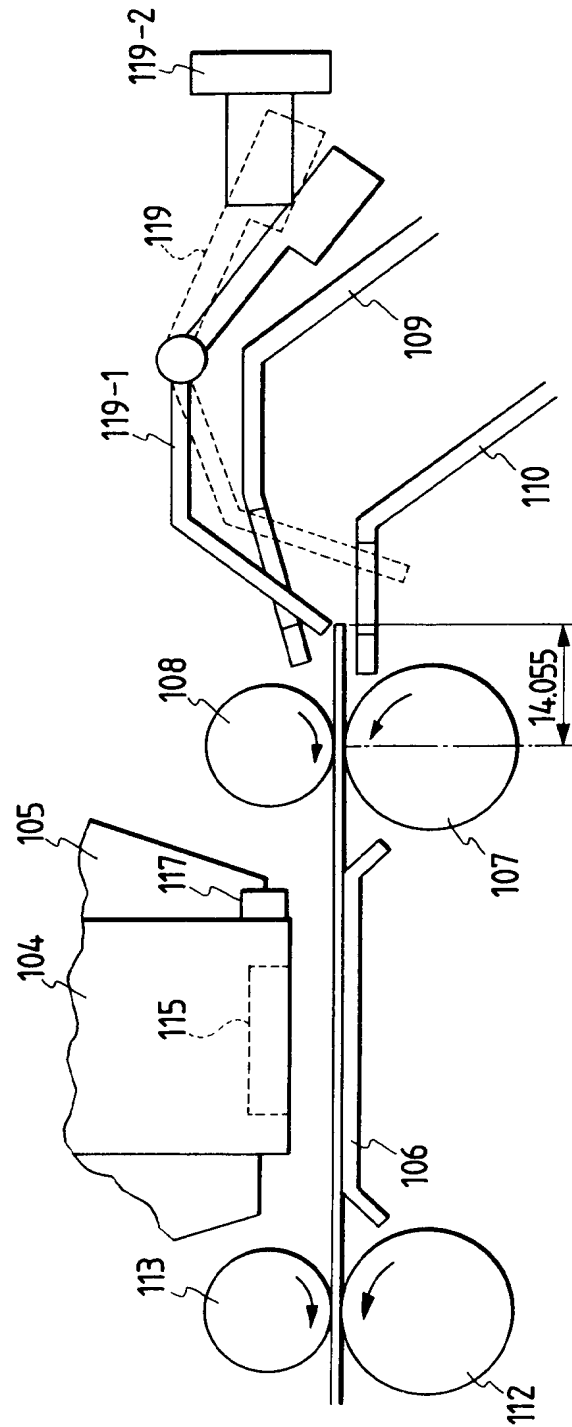


FIG. 38

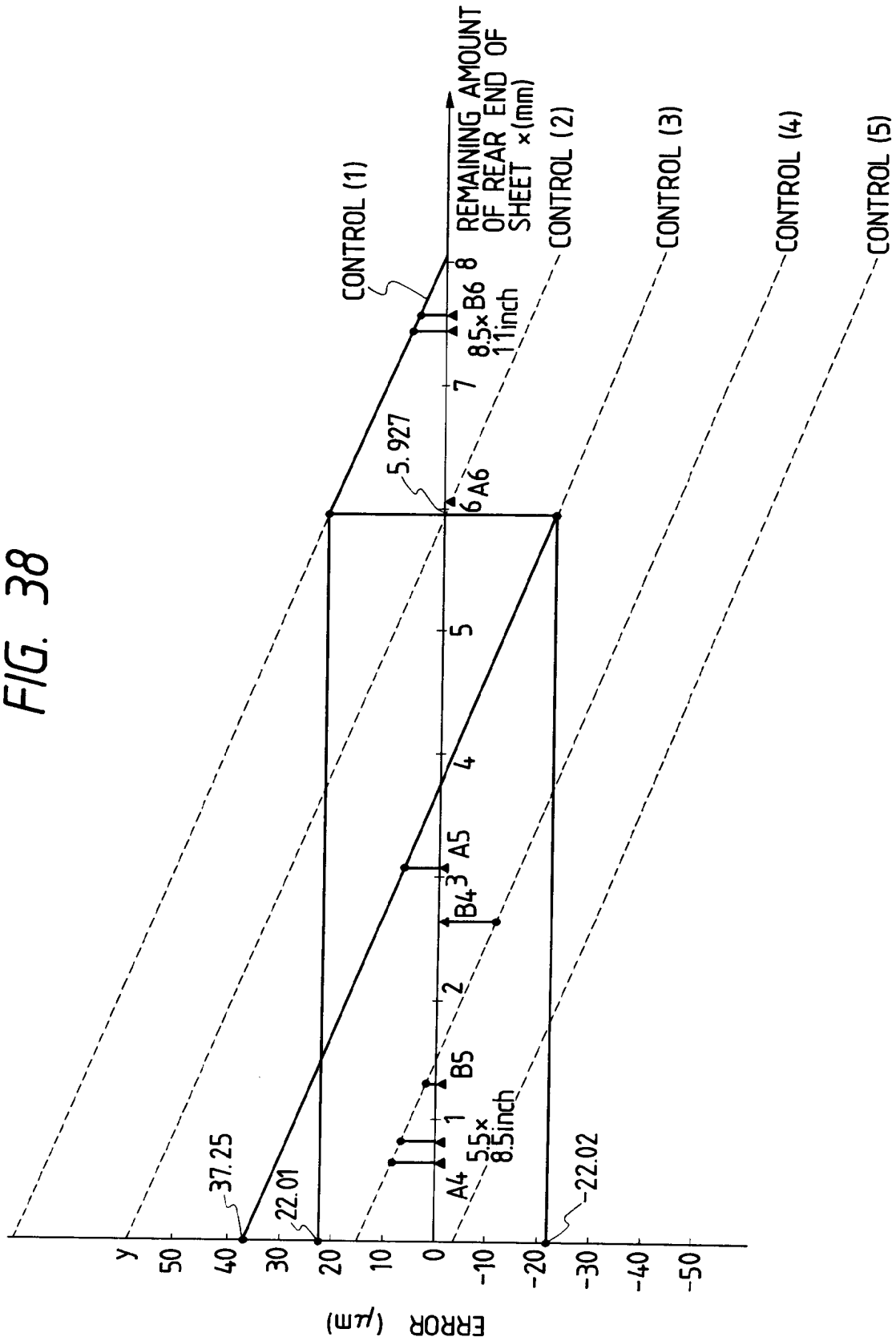


FIG. 39

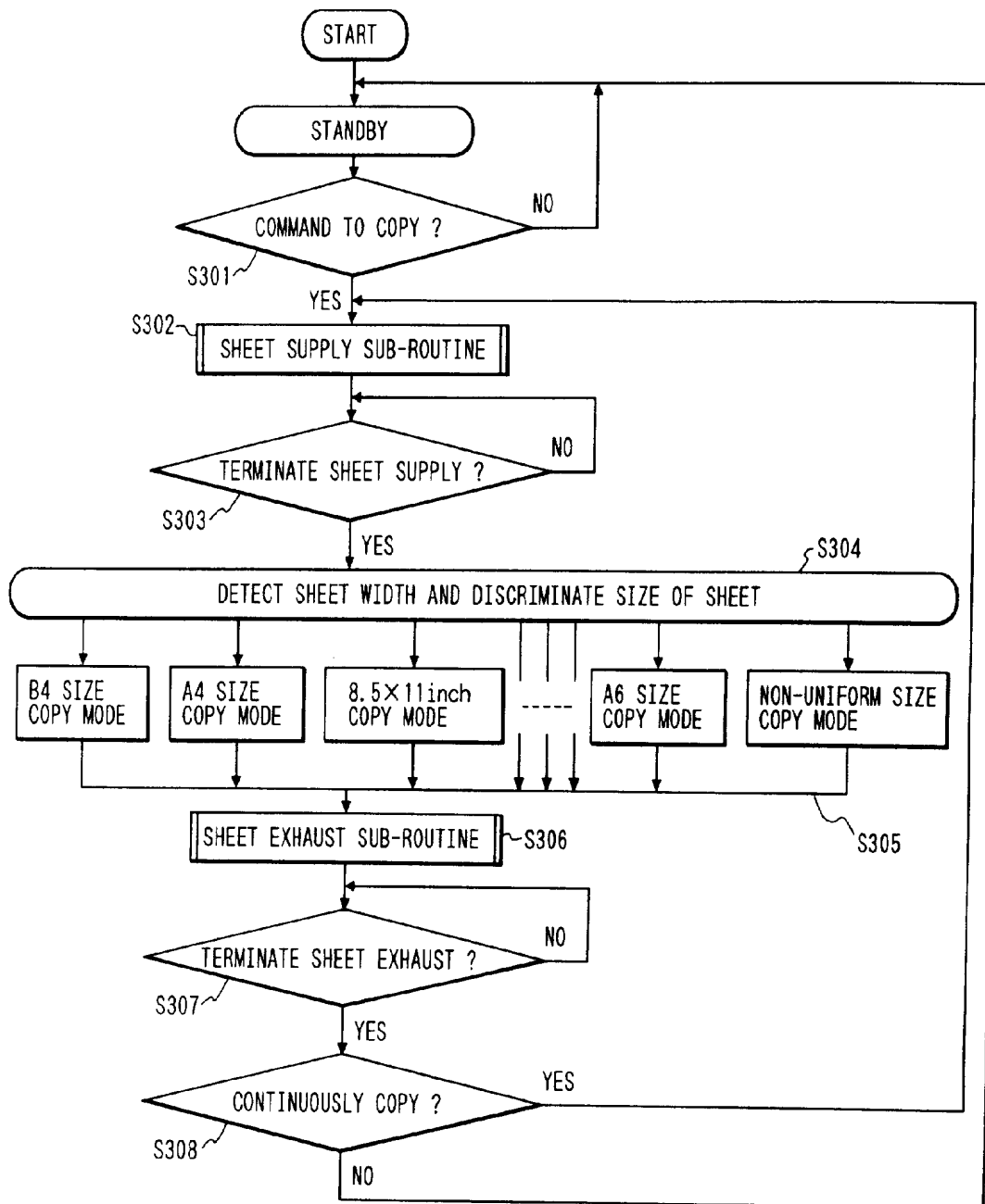


FIG. 40

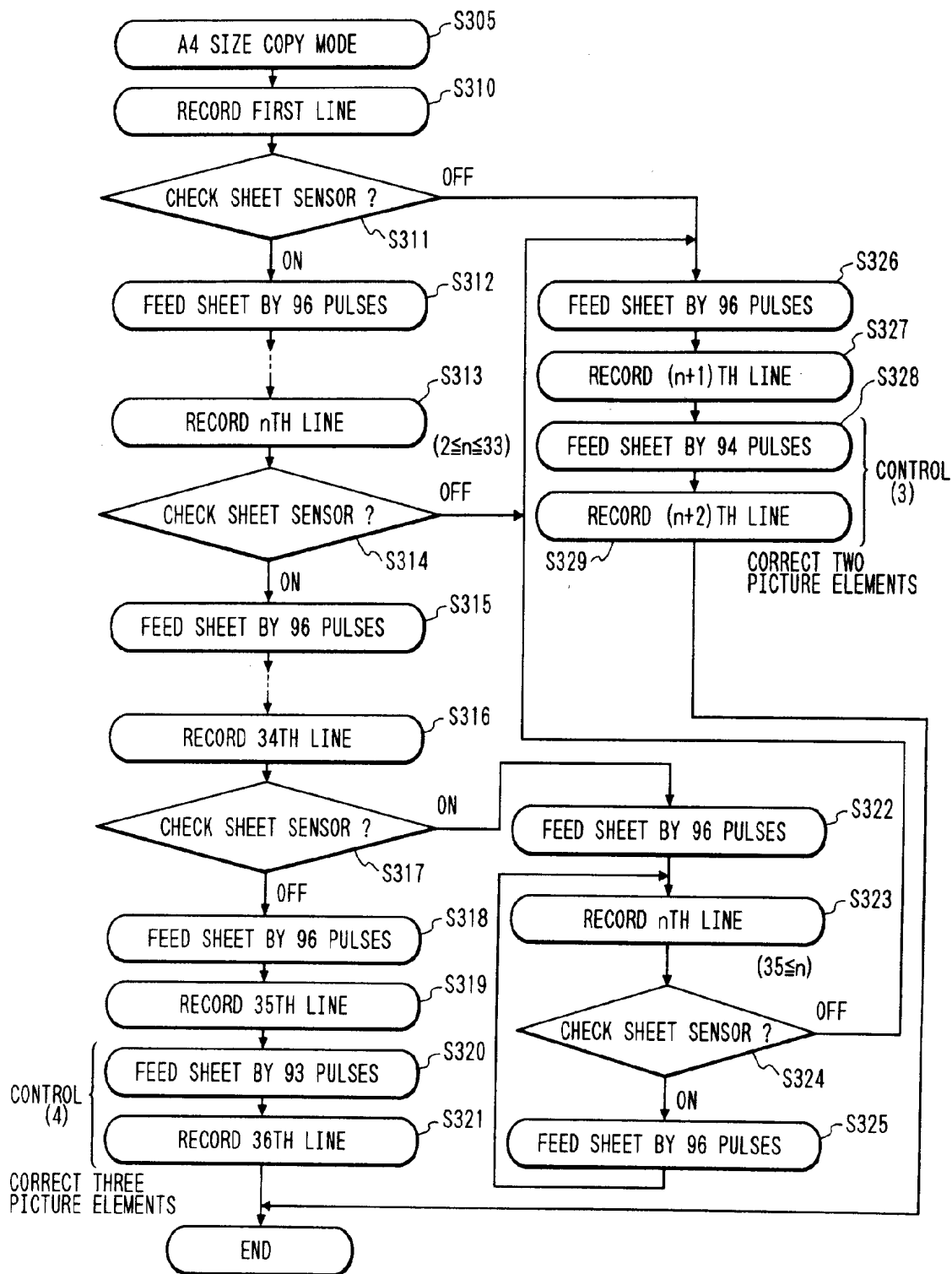


FIG. 41

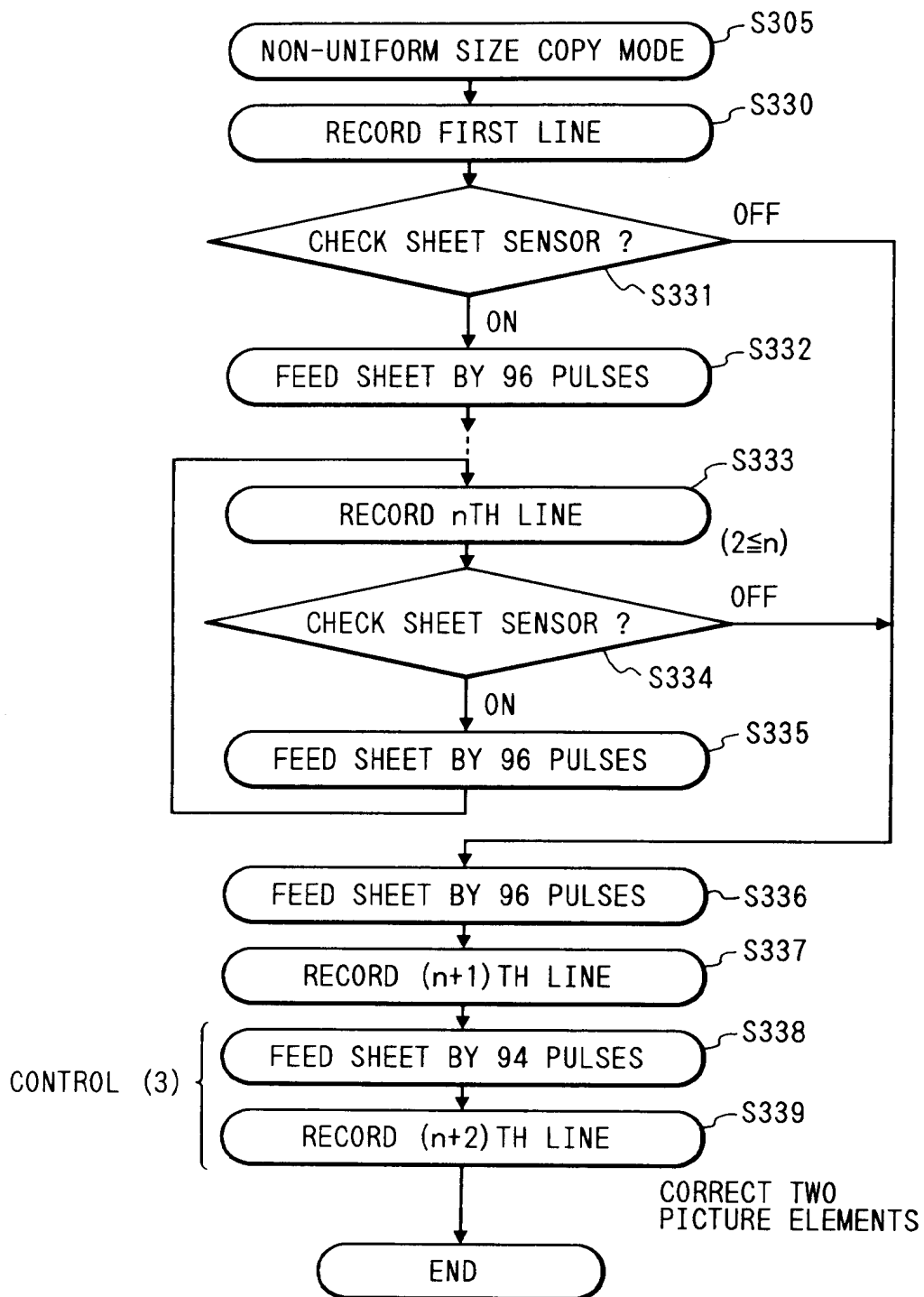


FIG. 42

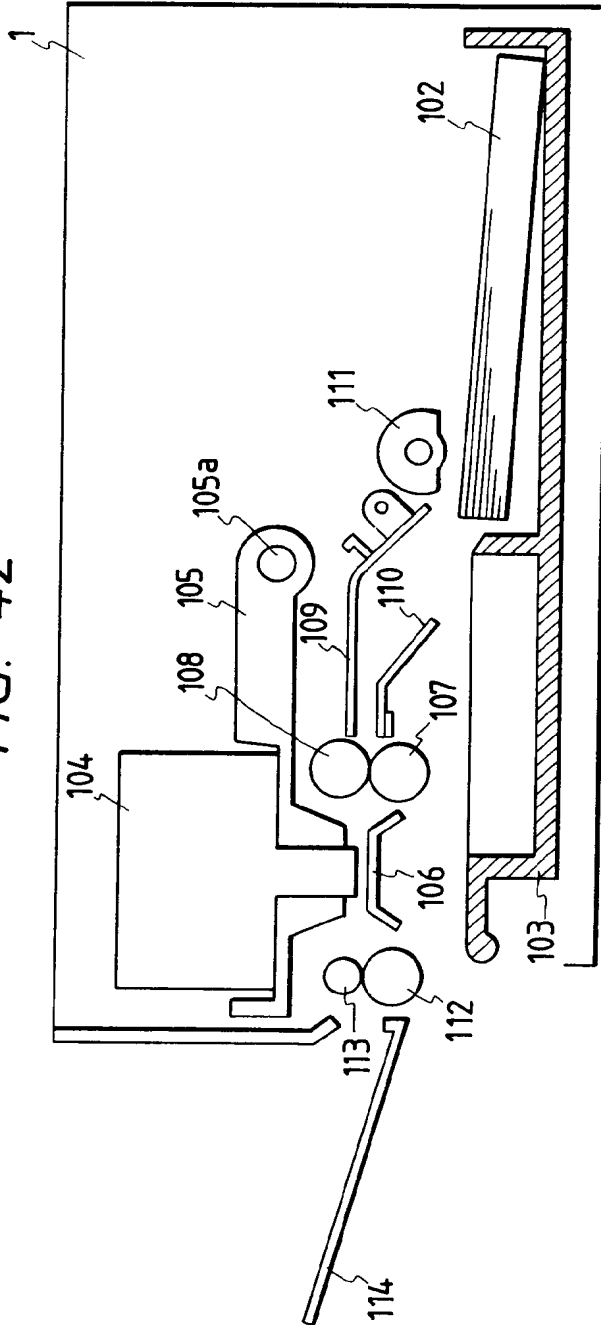


FIG. 43

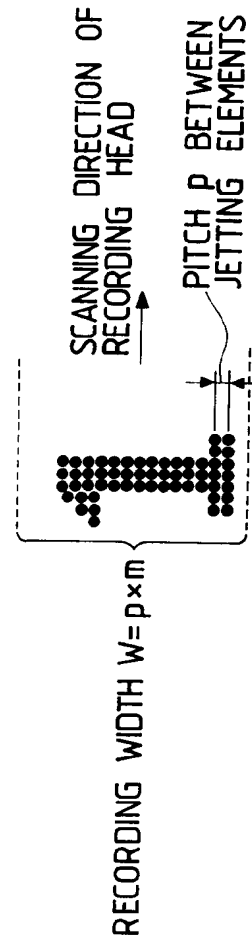


FIG. 44

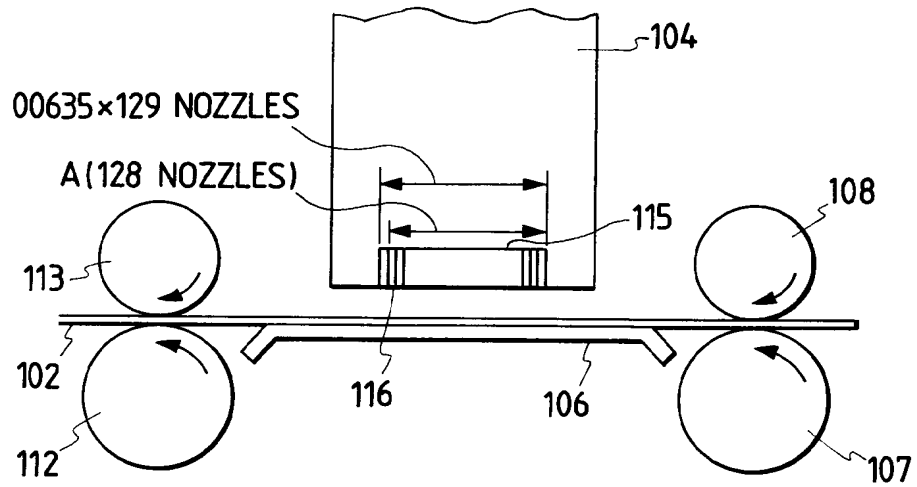


FIG. 45

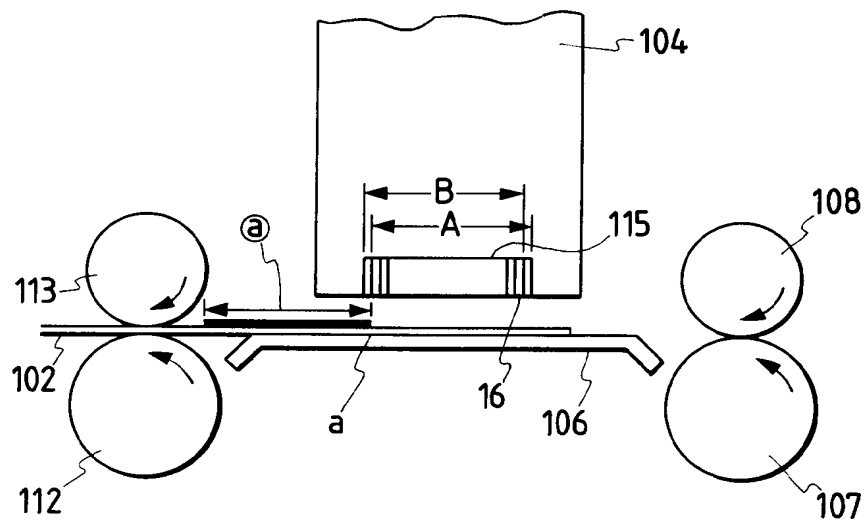


FIG. 46

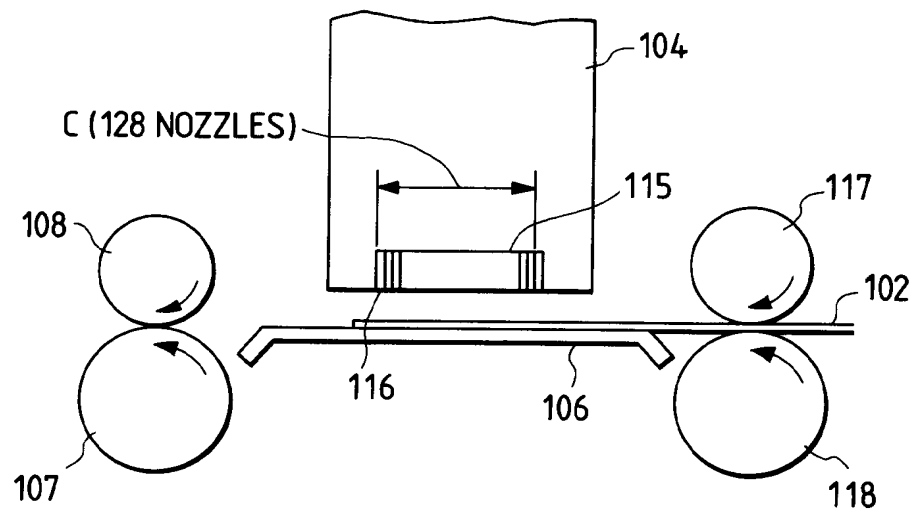


FIG. 47

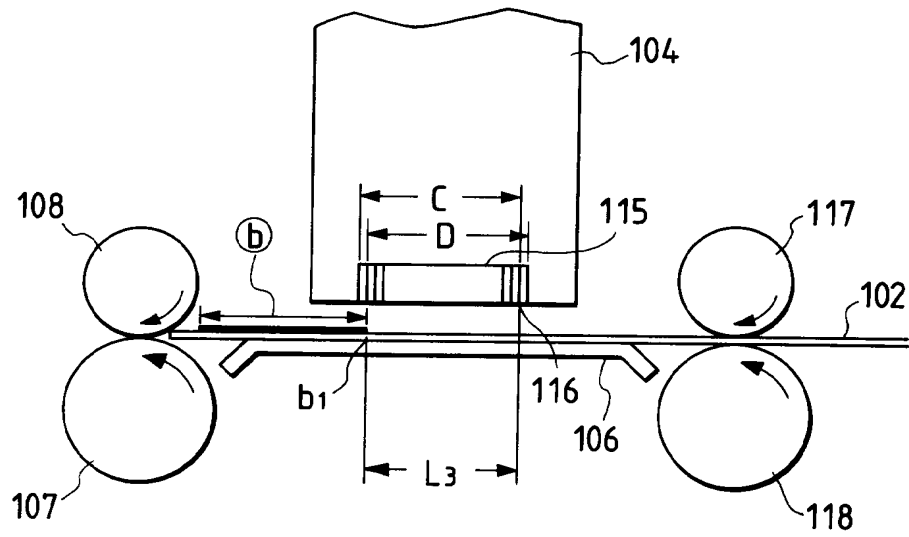


FIG. 48

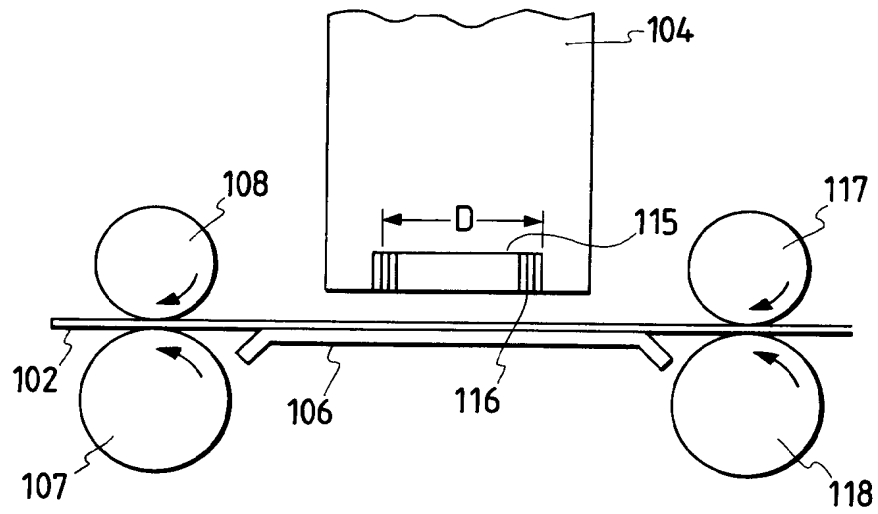


FIG. 49

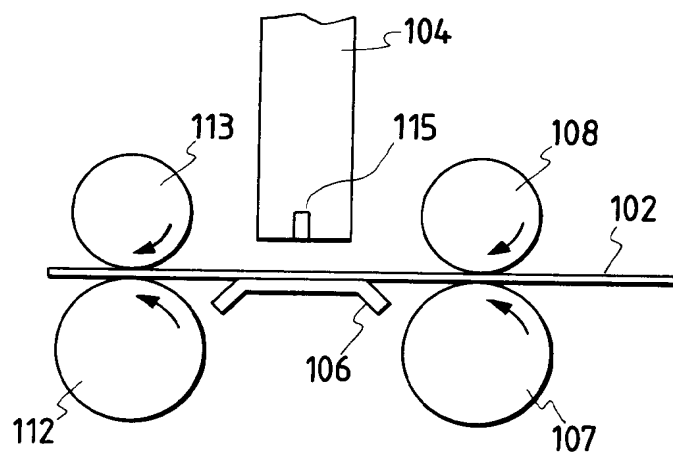


FIG. 50

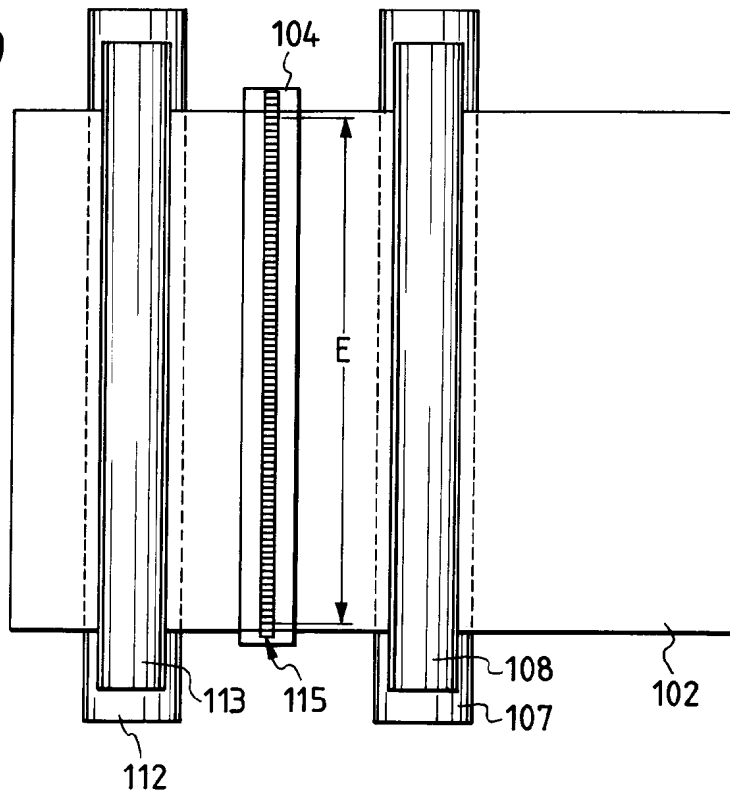


FIG. 51

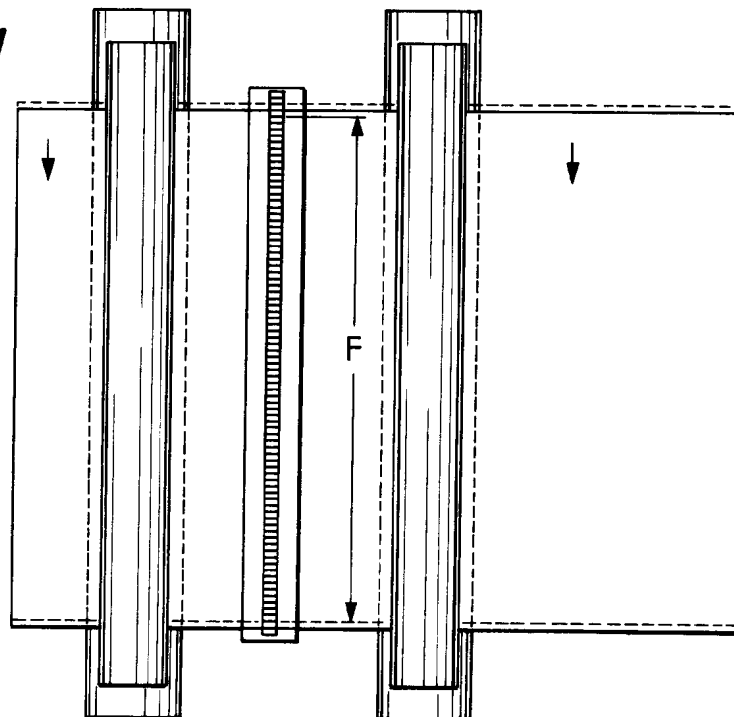


FIG. 52

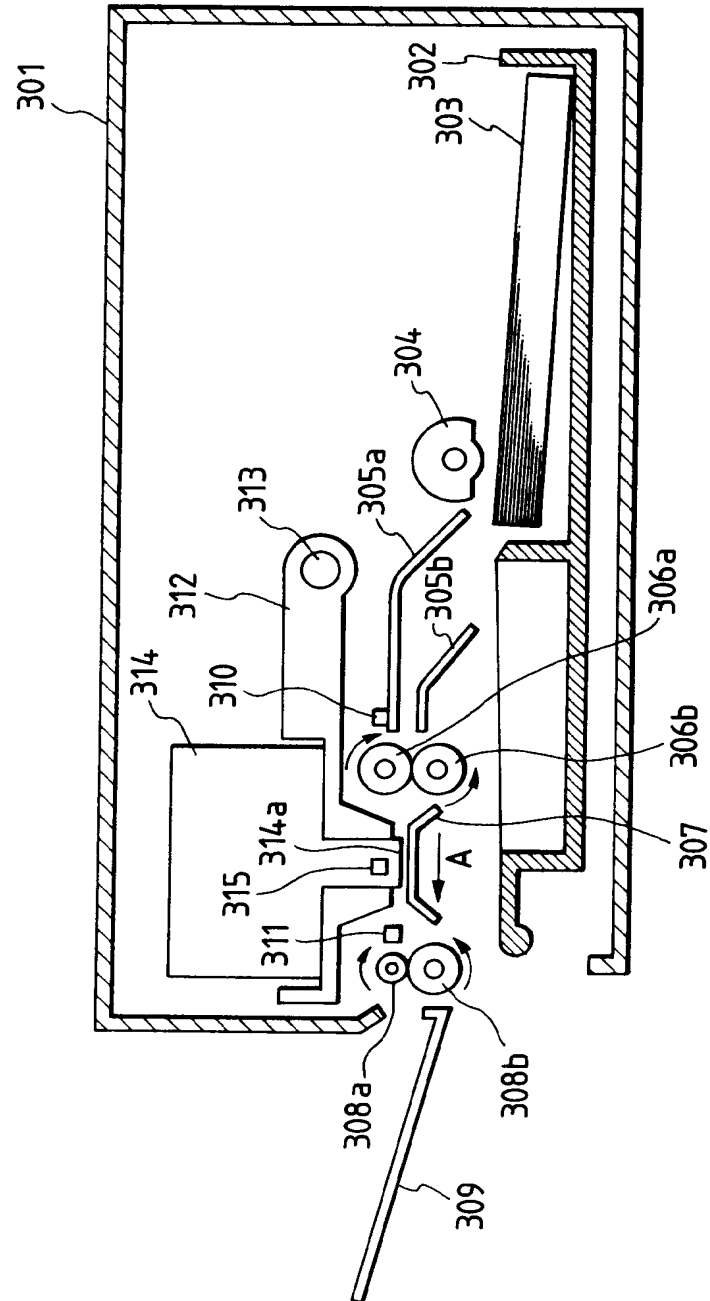


FIG. 53

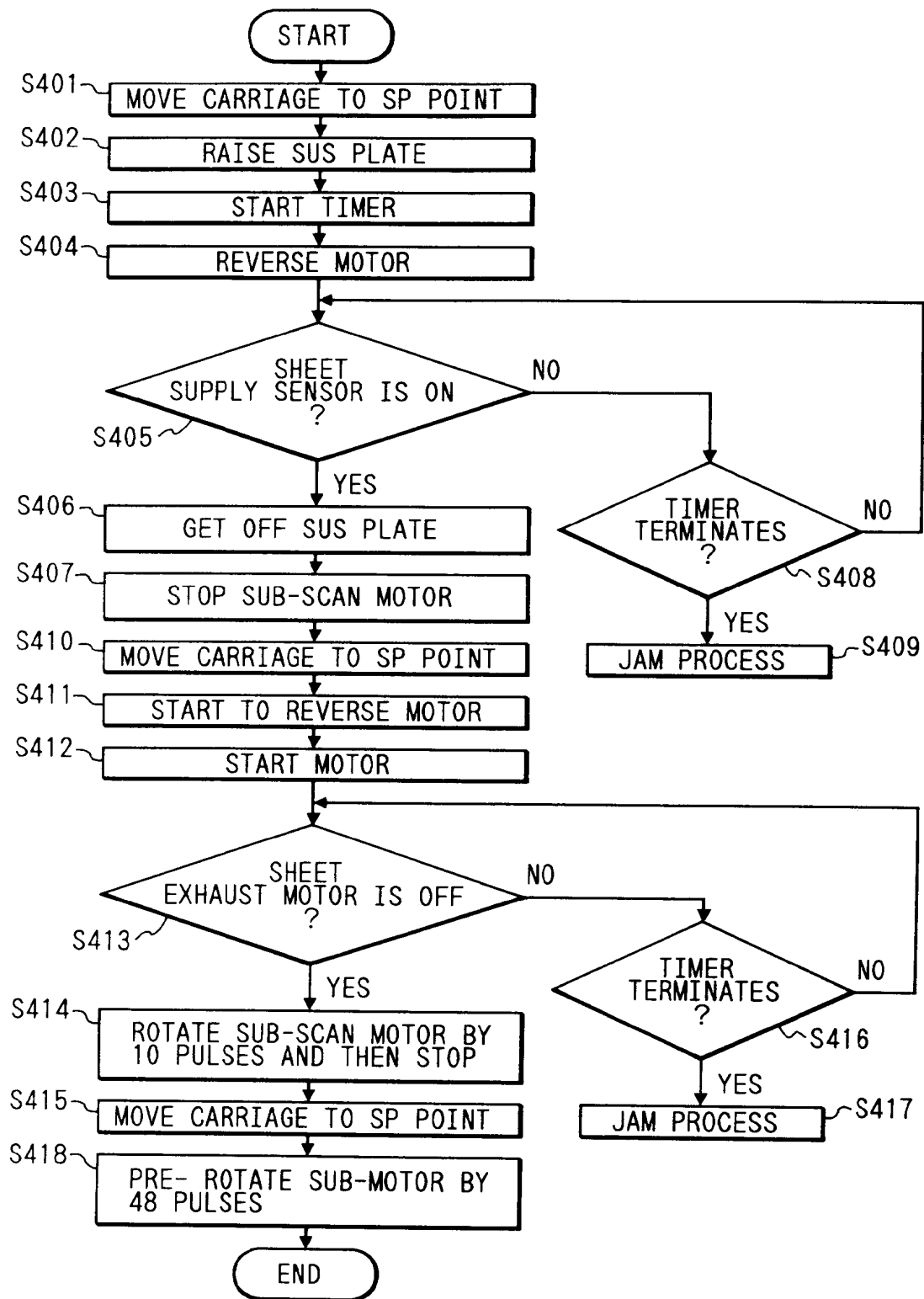


FIG. 54

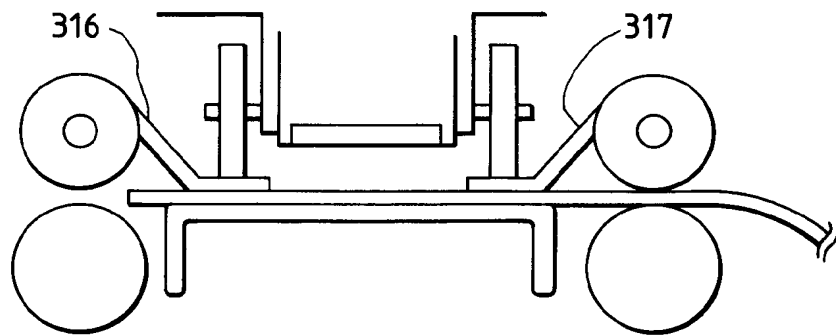


FIG. 55A

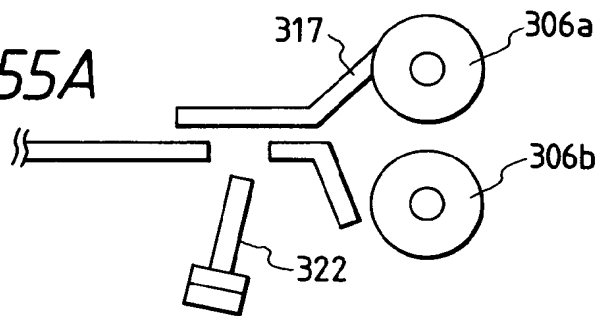


FIG. 55B

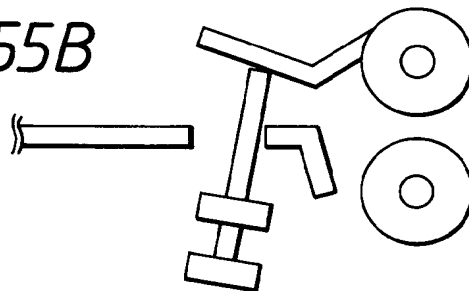


FIG. 55C

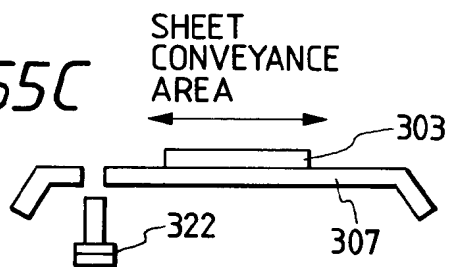


FIG. 56A

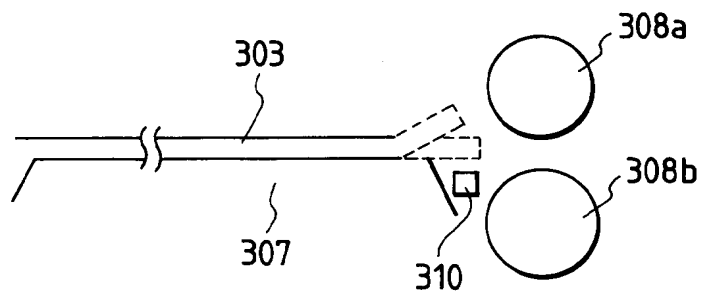


FIG. 56B

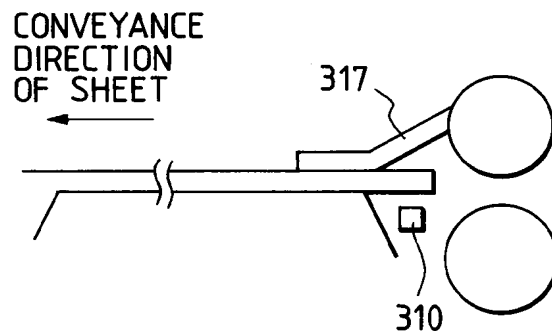


FIG. 57

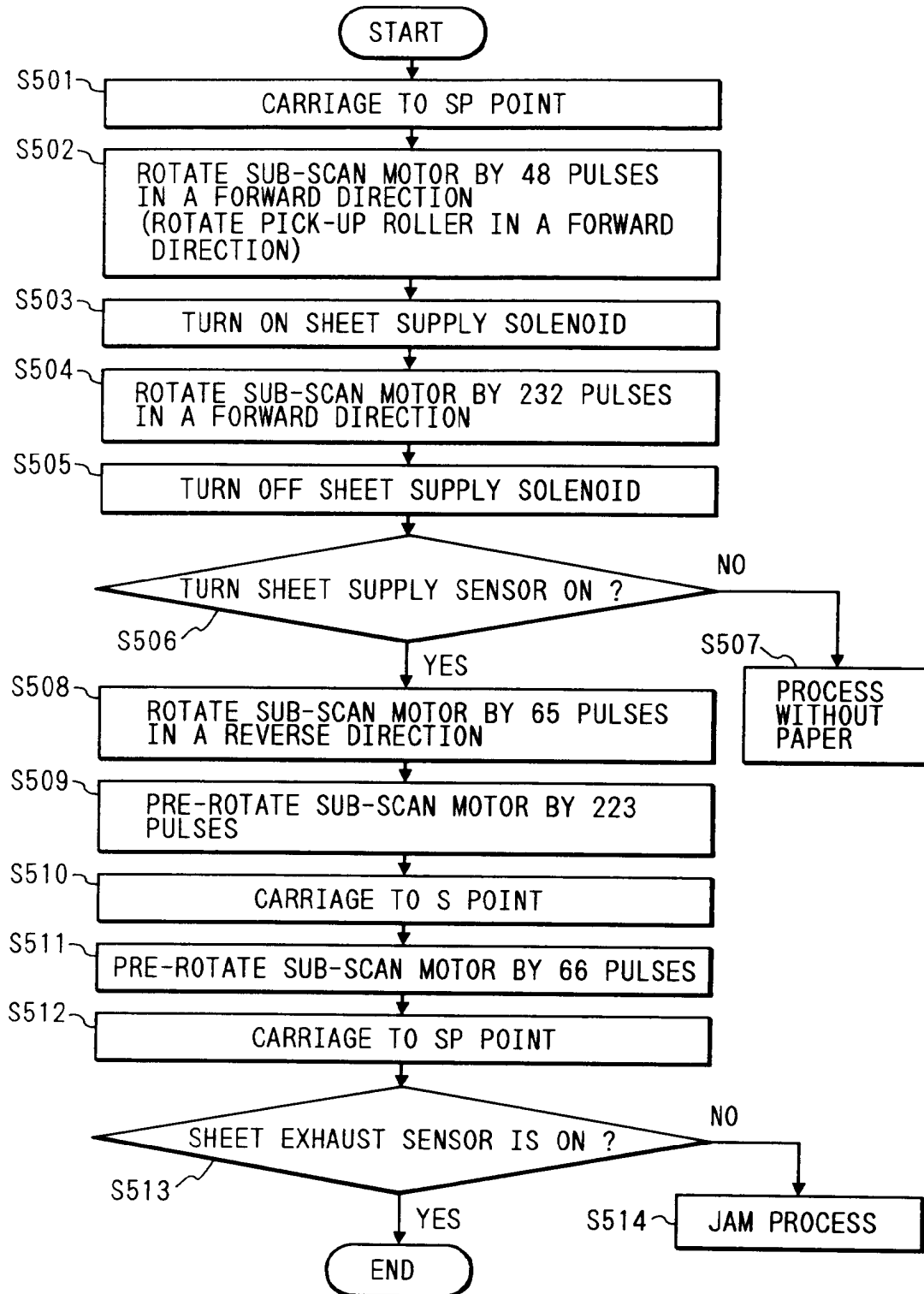


FIG. 58

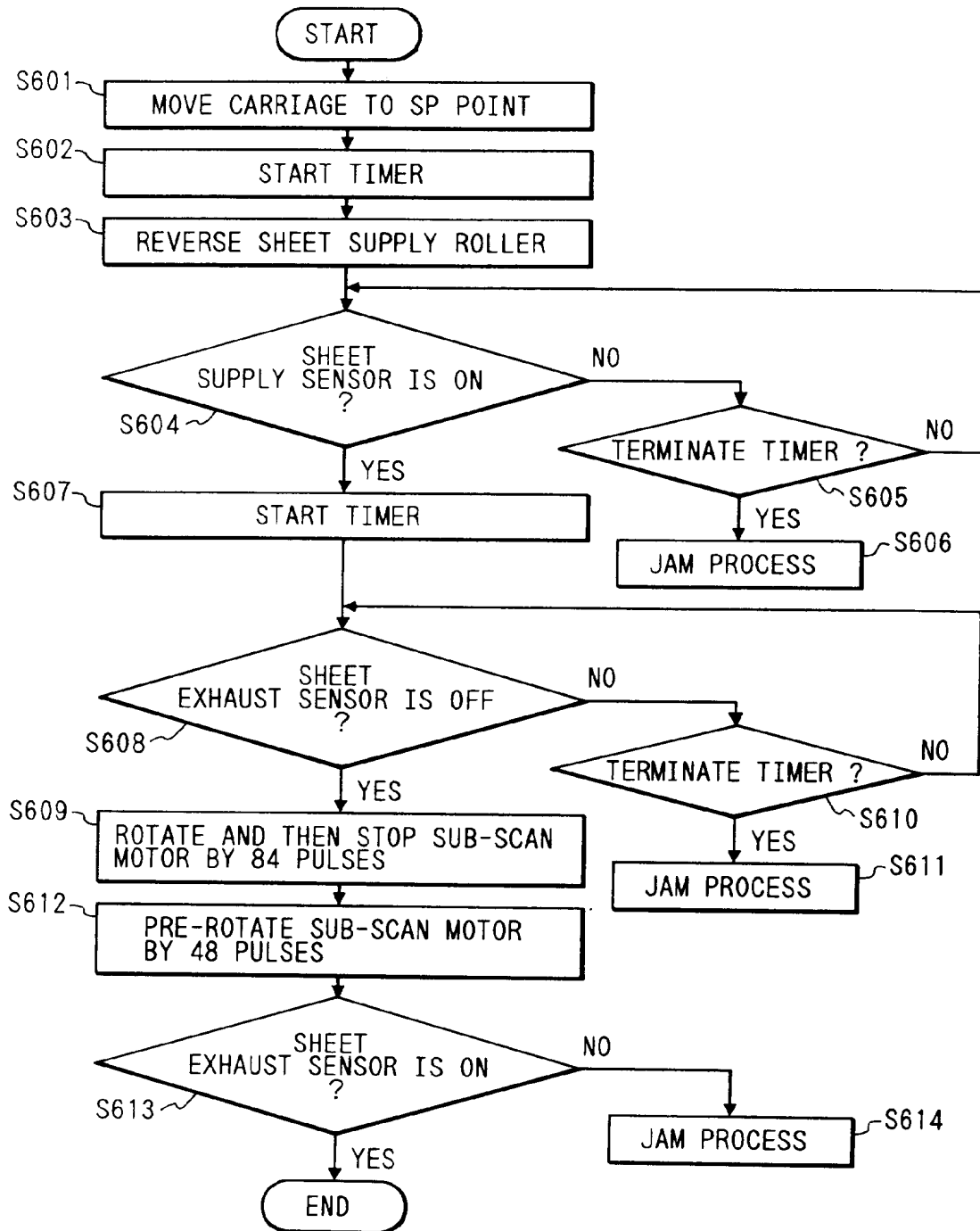


FIG. 59

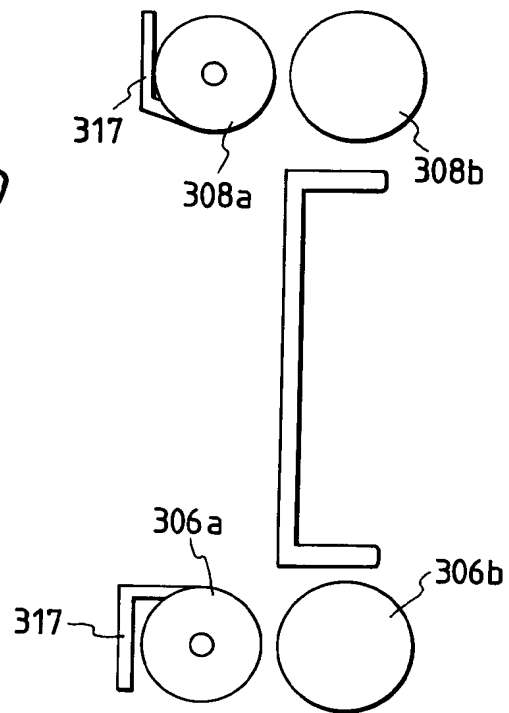


FIG. 61

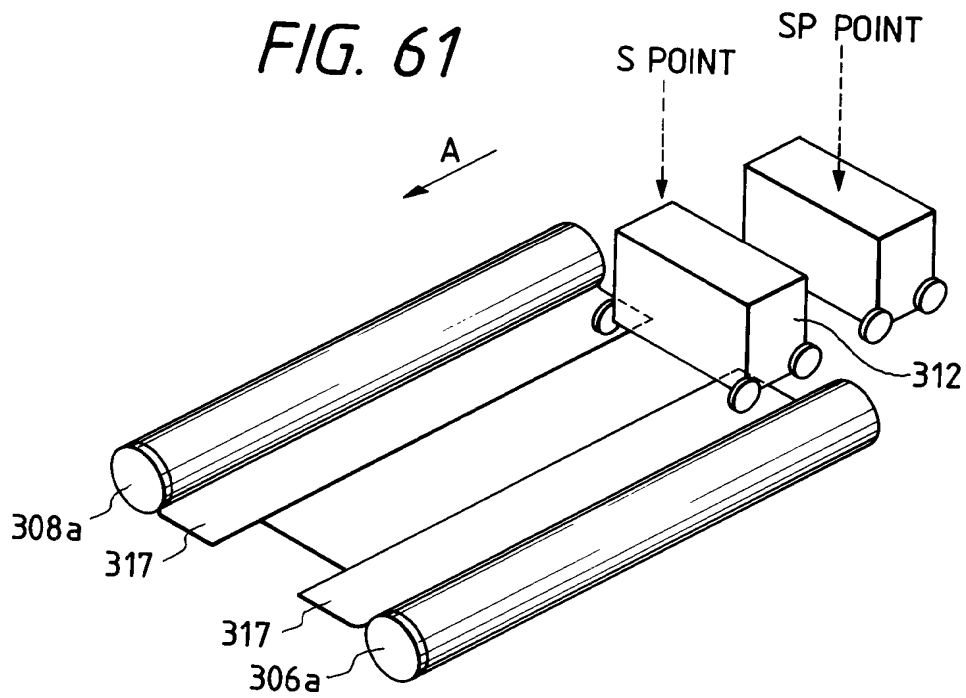


FIG. 60

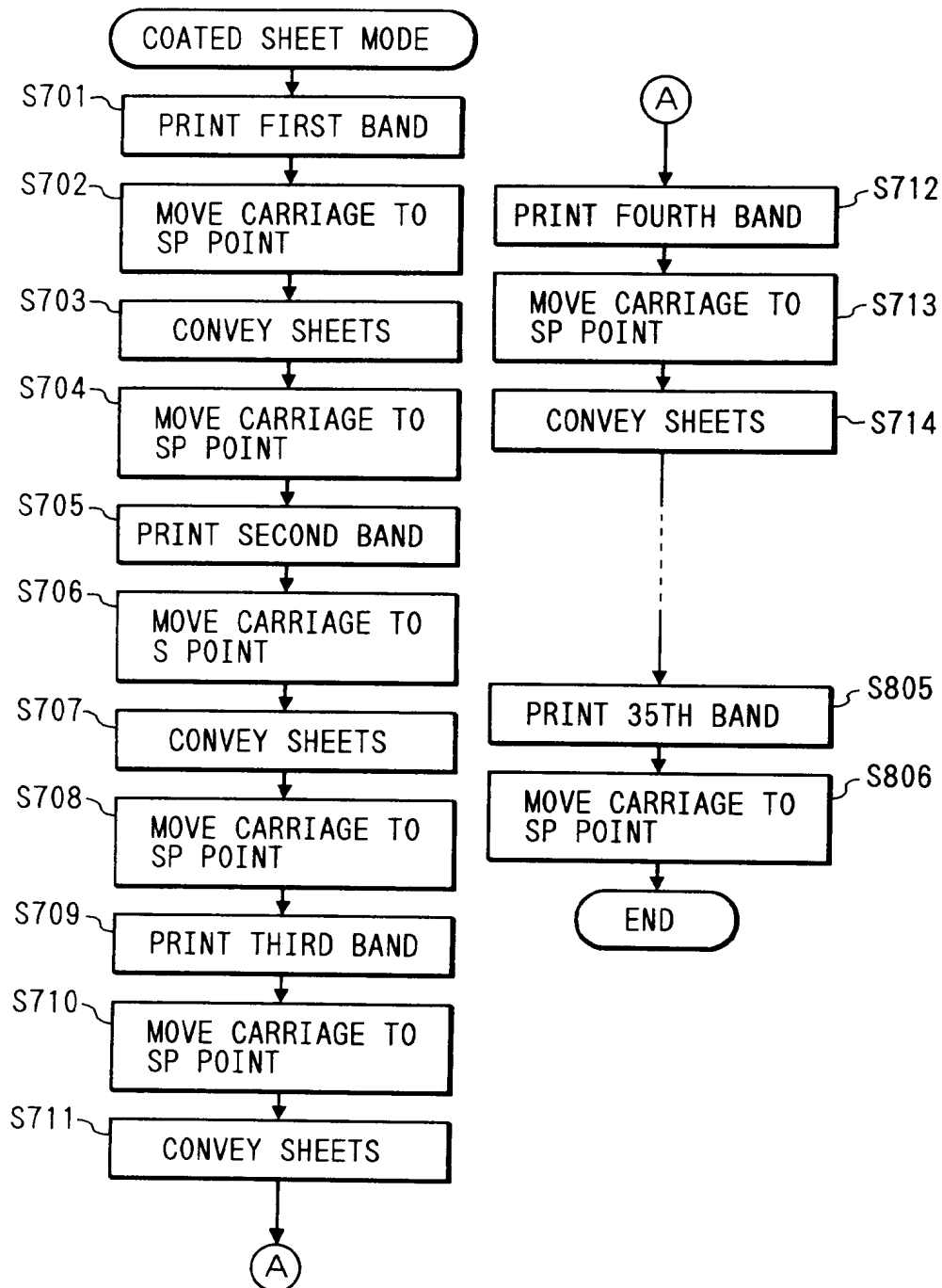


FIG. 62

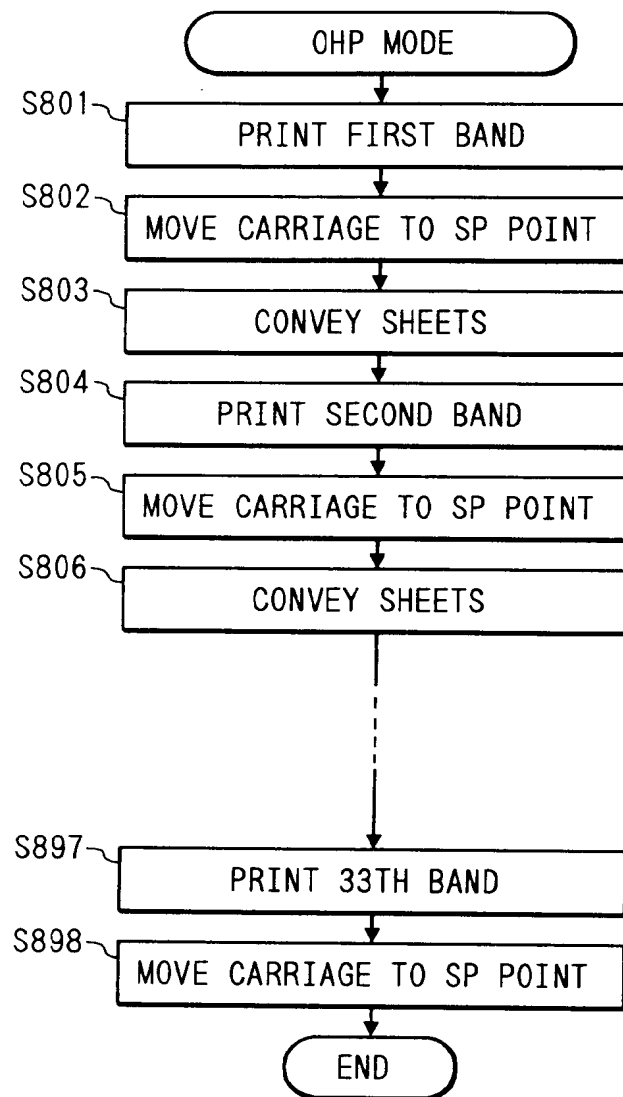


FIG. 63

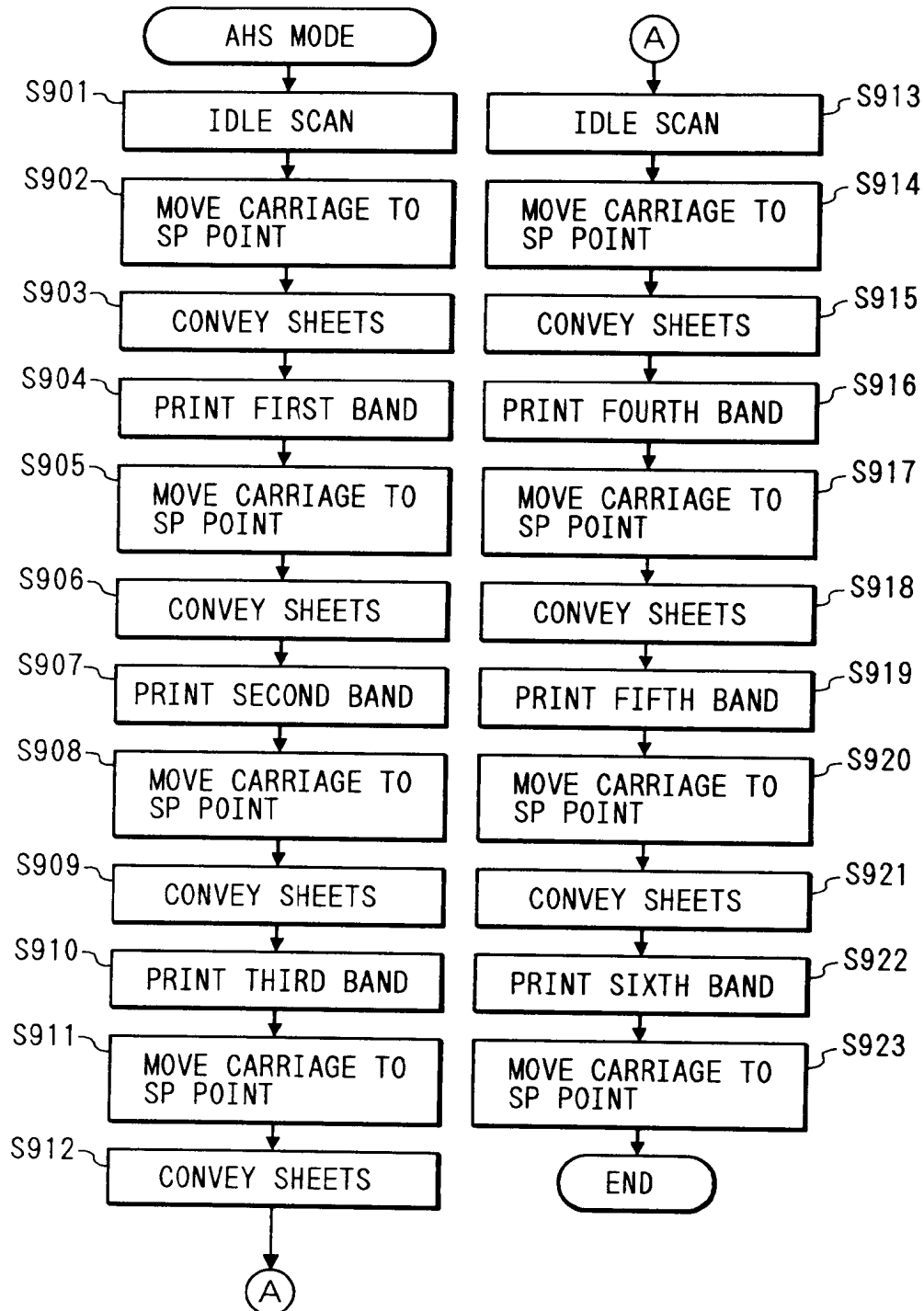


FIG. 64

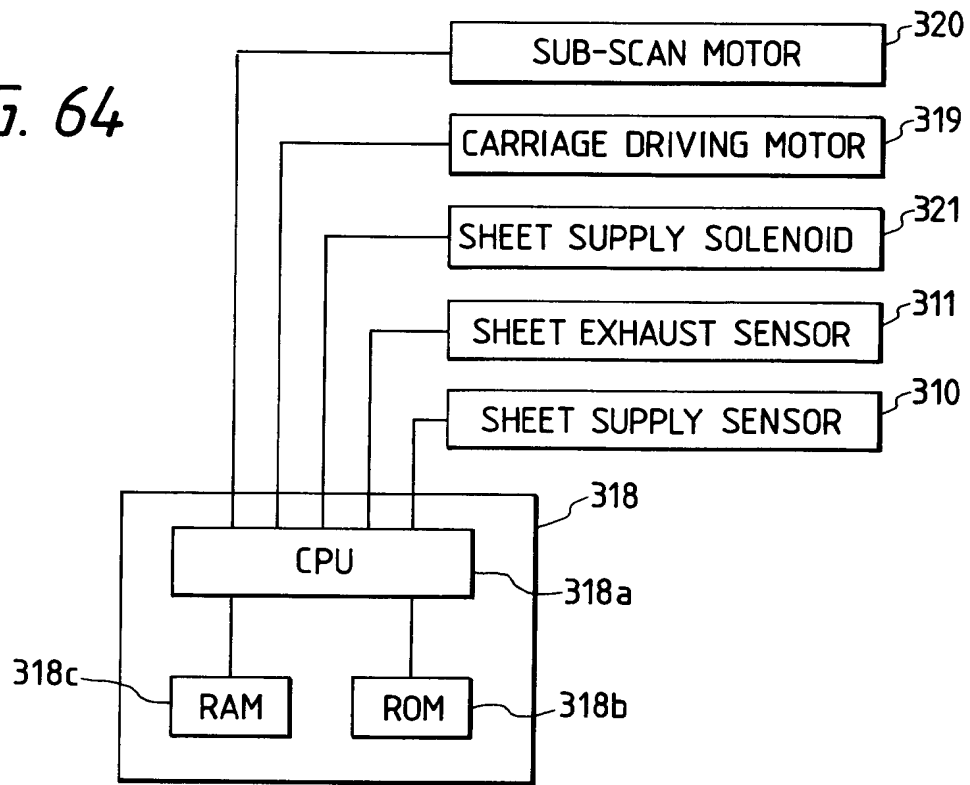


FIG. 65A

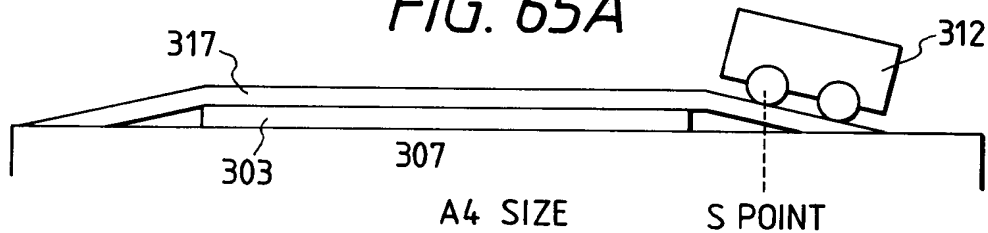


FIG. 65B

